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THE
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OR,

The STORY of *AP THOMAS*.

AN

HISTORICAL NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

How fierce a fiend is passion!
With what wildness, what tyranny untamed,
It reigns in woman. Unhappy sex!
Whose easy yielding temper, gives way
To every appetite alike. And love
In their weak bosoms is a rage
As powerful as hate and as destructive.

ROWE.

VOL. I.

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v. 1 -

NEVER was a country more signally rescued from tyranny than was England by the Earl of Richmond, afterwards Henry the Seventh.

Richard the Third, nicknamed Crook-back, finding himself on the verge of dethronement, attached to his person those of an ambitious spirit who might be able to maintain, and put into execution, his tyrannical designs.

The people of Wales, to whom Richard had given too many considerable causes of complaint, eagerly embraced this opportunity of being re-

venge'd on him by favouring the designs of Richmond.

This Prince was the son of Margaret Countess of Richmond, the sole daughter and heiress of the Duke of Somerset, sprung from John of Gaunt Duke of Lancaster: but the descent of the Somerset line was itself illegitimate, and even adulterous. And although the Duke of Lancaster had obtained the legitimation of his children by a patent from Richard the Second confirmed by parliament, it might justly be doubted whether this deed could warrant any title to the crown; since in the patent itself succession to the kingdom is expressly excluded.

Richmond landed at Milford Haven in Wales, where he was joined by a numerous body of troops headed by Sir Rice ap Thomas, who had been sent by Richard to prevent his landing.

Richard, who knew not at what part of the kingdom his adversary might land, placed himself at Nottingham, the centre, that he might be able to fly immediately to the threatened part.

Meanwhile Richmond advanced towards Shrewsbury, receiving every day reinforcements from his partisans: Sir Gilbert Talbot joined him with all the vassals and retainers of the family of Shrewsbury: Sir Thomas Boucher and Sir Walter Hungerford brought their friends to share his fortune; and the appearance of men of distinction in his camp made already his cause wear a favourable aspect: Lord Stanley was secretly his friend, though he was compelled to conceal it, as Richard retained, as security for the honest performance of his orders, his beloved son.

The numerous army of Richard lay encamped at Nottingham: it consisted of upwards of one hundred and fifty thousand foot and a numerous body of cavalry. Richmond, whose courage was proof against all thoughts of fear, was not in the least daunted or disheartened at the prospect of that imminent danger. His greatest hope and confidence were in the nobility and gentry, whose courage had often been proved; nor was he deceived in that just and reasonable confidence: for with the utmost emulation and diligence they flocked to his standard at Shrewsbury, which place he had assigned them for the general rendezvous. Many nobles came at the head of their subjects and vassals, of which the most considerable of all was the Earl of Shrewsbury, who had often given signal proofs of his valour and gallantry: yet all the troops united

scarce amounted to a fourth part of the multitude they were to encounter with ; but the ardent emulation they had to purchase fame, and their great fidelity and undaunted loyalty to Richmond, whom they now considered their King, proved a sufficient equivalent to counterpoise the vast advantages, their enemy, by the superiority of numbers, had over them. Richmond, that he might give this ardour no time to cool, decamped from Shrewsbury in search of a more convenient ground to post his troops.

Richard also moved his quarters from Nottingham, and marched out to encounter the invaders, who had taken up a position at Bosworth : it was there, that Richmond gained his crown. Victory was for a while contended with great gallantry on both sides ; Richmond, in order to inspire his troops, rushed into the thickest

of the battle, dealing death around him.

It was then that the brave Prince was deserted by every one but Sir Rice ap Thomas, one of the most valiant of his assistants; and, being surrounded by the enemy, had undoubtedly lost his life, had it not been for the resistance made by that worthy and faithful follower, who, at the expence of his own life, preserved that of his prince, and gave him an opportunity of disengaging himself, and making his retreat. But it was not long before he had an opportunity of revenging himself for the imminent danger he had been in, and for the loss of his faithful servant ap Thomas; for Lord Stanley began a furious charge upon the lines of Richard, whereby Richmond had an opportunity of rallying his dispersed band, which he had no sooner done, than he faced

about again, and, in his turn, routed the tyrant; who, seeing the day lost, rushed into the thickest part and perished.

After this brave action, in which victory was declared for Richmond, the remnant of the enemy betook themselves to flight. Sir William Catesby, the great instrument of Richard's crimes, was taken prisoner, and the greatest part of the army was left dead on the field of battle.

This victory, so glorious and complete, at once put an end to the war. The triumphant king was very liberal in his praises, acknowledgements, and rewards, to all those noble warriors who had been so opportunely serviceable to him upon this emergent occasion: but Lord Stanley was more particularly honoured with all the distinctions and deference he had so worthily deserved, the King himself pub-

liely acknowledging, that he was indebted to the valour and good conduct of the gallant Lord, for the greatest share of his present triumph.

He accompanied Richmond to London, and had a very distinguishing part in the magnificent reception the citizens had prepared for the victorious monarch ; and, with the King's approbation and consent, he was welcomed into that city with acclamations and other honours, due as well to his illustrious birth, as to his great personal merit and most important services.

His credit with Richmond, whom we shall call in future by the name of Henry the Seventh, was so great, that numerous applications were made to him, to intercede for the lives of some of the captives of superior birth ; and Stanley employed his interest with his Majesty so effectually, that, upon his account the King recalled the sen-

tence of death he so deservedly had passed on the unfortunate commanders, and changed it into either that of a pardon, or imprisonment.

Lord Stanley, after having received from the King all the marks of friendship and grateful acknowledgements he could expect or desire; took his leave and departed, in order to return to his mansion. Upon his arrival there, he had no other thoughts but those of enjoying the pleasures that generally follow a glorious victory. His first care was to gratify those, whose courage and merits had best contributed, and had been most instrumental to the trophies and honours he had obtained.

Charles and Reuben ap Thomas, the sons of Sir Rice ap Thomas, though very much in Henry's favour before, were among the first who tasted the effects of his liberality and gratitude,

so justly due to the memory of that faithful follower, their father. As for Charles, the King gave him some considerable employs, kept him near his own person, and bestowed several honorable and advantageous posts on his brother. The young gentlemen by their great merit soon made it appear, that they were not unworthy of his Majesty's munificence. Charles, whom, for distinction's sake, we shall call ap Thomas, by his uncommon qualifications, had, in a most distinguishing degree, gained general applause and esteem. He was scarce arrived at his twenty-sixth year, and had already given frequent and indisputable proofs of singular valour in several places and upon different occasions; and at the battle of Bosworth he left bloody marks of vengeance for his father's death. He had a soul great and generous; a genius lofty and pe

netrating, yet easy and free; his own admirable natural parts were improved, and highly embellished by an excellent and liberal education. Added to which, his person was amiable and agreeable, his mien and air noble and free from affectation, and he was so extremely grateful, in his minutest actions, that it was impossible to see him without conceiving a strong love and inclination towards him.

He excelled in all the bodily and martial exercises, which were at that time in use among the nobility and gentry of England. No man sat firmer on horseback, or rode with a better grace than he; and from the age of sixteen, he had given many proofs of his uncommon strength, agility, and dexterity, in managing a variety of weapons.

But he was not the only distinguishable person in the court. There were

many noblemen and gentry, who, by their singular merits and gallantry were the ornament of their country, keeping up the state and dignity of their families, and the greatness of their fortunes. The most illustrious and remarkable of these were: the Earl of Pembroke the King's uncle, now Duke of Bedford; Edward Courtney, created Earl of Devonshire; Chandos, Earl of Bath; Giles, Lord Daubeny; and Sir Robert Willoughby, Lord Broke; and several others.

But notwithstanding these noble personages alone composed a very gallant court, yet the ladies who every day shined there were without dispute its chief ornaments. Henry had now espoused Elizabeth; she was extremely beautiful, but excessively imperious and haughty, and most violently governed by her passions. Dissimulation and artifice, were

the favorite foibles of her mind: her heart was vain and amorous, and her natural disposition to love was the cause, that, without resisting, she gave herself up to that fatal passion, which, in the end, had nearly proved her destruction.

Lady Murray, who had been a widow for some time, was a most consummate beauty. Her charming person seemed to have been modelled by the very graces themselves: and there was never found before, in any single beauty, a complication of so many brilliant and enchanting perfections, as were united in that lovely lady. She triumphed in all the graces of unblemished virtue, without the least mixture of stiffness, pride, or affectation: her wit was exquisitely poignant and sublime, and her conversation always free, affable, and easy. In a word, there was not one

lady in the whole court of England, who was in any way comparable to this matchless woman. Since her husband's death, she had withdrawn herself from the court, and was retired to her estates near Canterbury. So attractive were her charms, that she had infallibly drawn the whole court after her, had not the apprehensions of disturbing a retirement, of which she seemed so extremely fond, restrained her admirers from following her: nevertheless their Majesties obliged her sometimes to leave her solitude, and to shine at court, whenever any particular solemnities happened, on which it was thought requisite, that England should produce, and expose to public view all its most brilliant ornaments: but this fair recluse always returned, as soon as possibly she could, to that happy and delicious abode, which was

become the centre of her whole ambition, and all her desires.

Next to Lady Murray, who, for their beauty, were of the greatest consideration, were, Ladies Egerton, Lainley, Obey, Leverton, Freeman, Rook, Heartley, and a great number of other most accomplished ladies : and, in short, this court was the most numerous, splendid, and magnificent of any country.

As Henry was lately married to Elizabeth, his great magnificence, and his complaisance to oblige the Queen, was the standard which was followed by all his courtiers. The passionate love he had for his spouse, engaged him to invent innumerable diversions, and sumptuous entertainments every day : at all which, the god of love was the principal actor ; and certainly Cupid never established the throne of his empire in so agreeable a situation.

The hearts of all were inspired with the little god, nor was reason, by an importunate, troublesome severity, ever any obstacle to the soothings and flattering hopes of those votaries of that blind deity. Charles ap Thomas alone, with an unpardonable singularity, seemed to be wholly indifferent and unconcerned, amidst so many, whose breasts were all in a flame. This insensibility of his, exposed him to the censure and resentment of all those beauties who had any pretensions to his heart, and rendered him obnoxious to the raillery of such gallants, who would not imitate him in an insensible indifference so inconsistent with his years, and so little answerable to the figure and appearance he made; but his assiduity and indefatigable care he took to please his King, seemed to be his whole concern and only occupation; nor did

his sensibility seem to be otherwise bounded, than in studying the means of giving proofs of his zeal, love, and fidelity. A sentiment so rarely to be met with, in a court where love and gallantry were the reigning and predominant passions, soon became the subject of universal admiration, as his prudence and uncommon merit had been before.

The Queen whose soul was but too susceptible of the expressions of love, and whose penetrating eyes and distinguishing faculties were superlatively nice and delicate, was no longer able to behold the amiable and attractive qualification of ap Thomas, without being agitated with violent emotions. His employ gave him but too frequent occasions of poisoning her eyes with the resistless charms of his graceful mien and person, and her ears with the poignancy and eloquence of his

tongue. At first she perceived not the impressions his presence made on her heart, but confounded the esteem she had for him, and which he had so justly deserved, with those sentiments which proceeded from quite a different source; but, alas! she was soon disabused from an error of so great importance to her repose. With what regret, with what anguish of soul, did this Queen discover the true nature of those emotions which caused her to be concerned, and to have an interest in the destiny of ap Thomas! Her fierce and haughty heart, groaned at its defect, and was almost ready to burst. How many bitter tears did it cost her, to find herself under the cruel necessity of loving and sighing first! For in a word, the respectable deportment of ap Thomas breathed nothing but an awful veneration, and the abundant zeal he had for the consort of his be-

loved sovereign, his patron, and his benefactor: the closer views she took, and the greater attention she gave to all his actions, the less could she perceive in him the least spark or glimpse of that restlessness, which love alone creates, and inspires. Her virtue sustained a long conflict, with that merciless tyrannic flame, which preyed upon her heart. But, alas! how unequal was the match, and how vain and impotent the efforts! She soon lost ground, and yielding up herself to the discretion of that resistless passion which hurried her on, she made no difficulty of sacrificing to her inclinations all she owed, both to her honor, and to a husband who doated upon and even adored her. Her eyes were for a considerable time, the only interpreters of the sufferings of her soul; her pride, rather than her inclination, withheld her from making a declaration

to which she was so violently pressed by the vehement impulses of her heart. Self-love, self-opinion or vanity, easily persuaded this imperious, this haughty Queen, that ap Thomas, touched by her charms and beauty, must needs, at last, shew her, by his actions, what his respect and awful distance forbade him to utter with his tongue.

With this soothing prepossession, she amused herself for some days, a prepossession so favourable to her amorous sentiments, which in spite of her innate pride and haughtiness, by degrees, decoyed her to make such advances, that ap Thomas could by no means have avoided discovering the source from whence they proceeded, had his profound veneration for her Majesty left him any room to harbour the least thought of any thing, but what tended towards the officious dili-

gence he always used in serving and attending upon her in the manner he was obliged to do, by his employs about her person. But the little desire or forwardness he expressed in being near her at the other times, besides those when his duty required his attendance, and his small attention, or inclination to make his advantage of her obliging and distinguishing behaviour to him, and the visible advances she made him, caused such an emotion, and so violent a storm in her impatient breast, that she imagined it might have been sufficient to wean her from any longer entertaining a passion, which she began to think unworthy of her: but it was not long that she had the satisfaction of enjoying that thought, so consistent with her duty and so flattering to her pride: for almighty love soon made her sensible, that all these notions, which

seem in appearance, to be contrary and opposite to his power, are nothing in reality, but the effects of his invincibility; and as a further demonstration of his indispensable power, he compelled her to stoop to a method of proceeding, to which she could never have imagined herself capable of submitting.

As she was walking one day alone in the palace gardens with ap Thomas, who had the honor of leading her by the hand, she had not power to resist the emotions she felt, nor to miss that favourable opportunity. "It is a long time ap Thomas," said she, "that I have sought an occasion of discoursing with you in private. The insensibility, and remarkable indifference, of which you make profession, give too much offence to all the ladies of the court, not to excite my curiosity concerning a conduct and proceeding, which, with-

out dispute, conceals some secret mystery. You are in love, ap Thomas, I have found out the key to decypher those sentiments, which with such art, you so carefully endeavour to disguise; but I will not be indebted to my own penetration only, for the knowledge of a secret, which is rather due to my goodness towards you and the obligation you owe me upon that score."

This discourse, which ap Thomas so little expected, put him into so great a disorder, that he was utterly at a loss how to behave himself, and blushed to that degree, that his confusion appeared visible in his countenance. This the amorous Queen observed, and interpreted to her own advantage, "speak," said she, seeing he persisted in an absolute silence; "speak of this unseasonable constraint: my friendship for you will dispense with that respectful distance

you keep, and which is so very opposite to my desires.”—

“I do nothing but what I ought,” replied ap Thomas, “I am so sensible of the duty I owe your Majesty, to be so presumptuous, as to dare to entertain her with the affairs of my heart. As to the rest, my secrets are all bounded in endeavouring to find out the means of making my Sovereigns sensible of the veneration and respect I have for them, and the ardency of my zeal in every thing that concerns them.”

The Queen, who was very little satisfied with this answer, would infallibly have exacted from him one more positive, had not the King, who had been looking for her, come hastily up to her, with that air of eagerness, with which her presence always inspired him. Ap Thomas withdrew, out of respect, and retired; nor was

he at all sorry for the interruption of a conversation, the consequence of which he began to feel with trembling.—His eyes were opened on a sudden, and, by the Queen's visible concern, and earnest manner of expressing herself, he plainly discovered a great part of the sentiments of her heart; and, from what source that concern proceeded. He was afflicted with the greatest anguish of mind, if the idea he had conceived was real, nothing in the world could prevent his falling under the most fatal circumstances. As he had always made a firm and inviolable resolution, never to be guilty of any action that might stain his honour, or cast the least reflection on his untainted reputation; in order to preserve that worthy character, he, from thence forwards, very carefully avoided all occasions or opportunities of renewing those dangerous conversations, never

more going into the Queen's presence, except when his indispensable duty, or some particular command of the King's, obliged him to be there.

The penetration of the Queen was too great, and her heart was too deeply concerned in this new manner of proceeding to leave room for the least doubt what were the cruel motives for such conduct. She immediately concluded, that it conveyed along with it a face of unpardonable contempt, and that she was slighted; a thought she could not bear with any patience.

But those hearts which are brought under Cupid's yoke, are inspired with hopes and fears, just as that little god pleases, so, after having for awhile torn the Queen's with insupportable disquiets and perplexities, he presented to her view some more soothing and

agreeable ideas. She flattered herself that the care ap Thomas took to avoid being alone with her, was only the feeble and impotent efforts of a staggering, and half-vanquished virtue; and that, though he was in an extacy of delight at the thought of that happiness, of which she had partially shown him, yet, nevertheless, the hopes and prospects of what he might aspire to, had not so far dazzled his eyes, as to cause him to pass beyond the bounds of that respectful distance, and the awful duty which he had hitherto so worthily and so punctually observed, without violent agitations.

Her favourite lady of honour, Lady Lichfield, who was privy to her passion, from the very first moment in which she began to feel it, after having done all she possibly could to

destroy it in its infancy, was at last obliged to assist her in carrying it on.

This dextrous and artful confidante soothed and fortified her hopes by laying before her the great advantages and the glory, which the too happy ap Thomas ought to hope for and expect in the embraces of so charming a person: she insisted upon the necessity of letting him know the happiness which awaited him; a happiness, to which he, doubtless, never durst aspire, or ever dream of; and the Queen, who was herself resolved to follow the advice Lady Lichfield gave her, eagerly sought an opportunity to put it into execution; and, in effect, a few days after, in spite of all the precautions which ap Thomas had taken to prevent it, she found means to explain herself to him in such a manner, and

that in the presence of the whole court, as to leave him not the least room any longer to doubt of the affair.

As the Queen one day returned from walking, she was followed by a number of ladies into her apartment, where ap Thomas was obliged to be in attendance upon the King, who was there also. The conversation was at first general; a long discourse having been held concerning a fête, at which all the ladies were to be present habited like faïres. The next theme that was started among this illustrious assembly, was relating to an extraordinary circumstance which had lately happened at court; but that was soon laid aside; for the Queen, who never lost sight of her principal design, very adroitly turned the conversation upon the subject of love, and proposed a question of gallantry.

“ I would know,” said she, addressing herself to the King, “ on which side lies the greatest obligation; on that of the gallant, who makes the fortune of the lady who is the object of his love, or of him who owes his own to the person by whom he is beloved, and thereby receives an undoubtable proof of the love she inspires?”

“ For my part,” replied the King, “ I find not the least difficulty in deciding this question; it is so natural for us to delight in obliging, and more especially those whom we love, that, in my opinion, the advantage lies entirely on the side of him who lays the obligation; he acquires, from thence, a double right over that heart which he desires to touch; gratitude and acknowledgement cannot fail of making one value the source from whence the obligations proceed.”

“ This sentiment,” answered Lady Lichfield, “ is indeed worthy of such a King as you; but permit me to tell you, sire, that your high birth and fortune have put you in a condition of tasting the sweetness of the contrary proposition: I will readily agree with you, that nothing flatters a great and elevated soul so much, as that liberality and generosity, which is so natural to it; but, at the same time, I maintain, that he, who receives the obligation, must needs be more convinced of the force of those sentiments, which he has inspired; and, by so much the easier, as the more love produces in our favour, things difficult to the common sort of people, the more ought the love of ourselves to be flattered for our effort in that condescension.”

Lady Lichfield readily imagined, that ap Thomas, by the precarious situation of his circumstances and fortune, would have agreed with her in her opinion: and therefore asked him what he thought of those different sentiments.

“Madam,” said he, “notwithstanding I find an infinite pleasure in owing all I have to my sovereign’s bounty, yet, as to what concerns a mistress I have very different thoughts; and, as my circumstances will permit me to offer her nothing but an unfeigned love, so my pride will never suffer me to chuse any, but one who has nothing but her heart to bestow upon me.”

The Queen, who heard this, easily comprehended, that ap Thomas had

answered the intent with which she had proposed the question, much better than the question itself, and therefore commenced the discourse again, and, with an inimitable vivacity, said, "I should scarce have gone about to decide the question I myself proposed, had the example of the very gods themselves left us any room for suspense, how we ought to think upon this subject. Venus and Diana placed their whole felicity in Adonis and Endymion, notwithstanding the vast distance between them. It is true, that Atis, who had the same sentiments as ap Thomas has, was justly punished for refusing a fortune which would have made him completely happy; I, for my part," continued she, "who am often much inclined to lay obligations upon people, find that Cybela's resentment, with abundance of reason, ought to fall on

the head of an ungrateful man, who put it out of her power to exercise so noble and so generous a sentiment."

As she made an end of saying these last words, by a very severe look, full of indignation and resentment, she gave ap Thomas to understand, that he might expect the fate of the unhappy Atis, if he presumed to follow his example.

As it began to grow late, the company withdrew, leaving the Queen to take that repose, of which she stood so much in need. She was no sooner left to her liberty, than, addressing herself to Lady Lichfield, she said,

"Did you not take notice, with what care ap Thomas evaded the idea, which I would have had him comprehend? It is done, and I am no longer

able to exist under this cruel uncertainty ! I am determined to give him so clear an interpretation of what sentiments I have, and of what I suffer upon his account, that it shall be wholly out of his power to misconstrue the meaning of my words. If he answers my passion, how exquisitely great will be my happiness ! If he proves ungrateful, with what bitterness will the remainder of my life be attended ! But I shall have, at least, the poor consolation of dragging him down the same precipice, from which his insensibility shall have cast me. I am fully resolved to-morrow to explain myself ; let it be your care to give him orders, to be here to receive my commands.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER this manner it was, that the Queen suffered herself to be hurried away by the violence of that passion, which rent and consumed her heart: she no longer made any scruple of betraying a husband, whose tenderness and complaisance deserved quite a different treatment. The King doated upon her with a passion not to be expressed, and he thought himself completely happy: next to the Queen the person for whom he had the greatest affection, and in whom he placed the

greatest confidence, was ap Thomas: he, very deservedly, found in him so distinguishable a merit, and a zeal for all his concerns so disinterested and uncommon, that, without any reserve, he consulted him in his most important and most secret affairs: and ap Thomas, on the other side, would have sacrificed his own life a thousand times, to testify his great acknowledgements and fidelity to his gracious lord: but this happy tranquillity was soon troubled by that unseasonable and tyrannic passion, which raged in the bosom of the love-sick Queen.

According to the resolution she had taken, she caused ap Thomas to be conducted to her apartment, her orders being so expressly positive, that notwithstanding all the repugnance he had to obey them, he could by no means avoid it. There it was, that,

without hesitation, or the least apology, forgetting that modest reserve which ought to accompany her sex, she made him an open declaration of her love, of its whole progress and violence.

“ I know,” continued she, “ that a confession of this nature is too strong, and too gross, to proceed out of the mouth of a person in my station ; but by how much the greater is the extremity of its being so, by so much the more ought your heart to be touched with those sentiments which have forced me to such a procedure : as to the rest,” added she with a more haughty tone and air, “ it will be extremely dangerous to you, to have been made privy to my passion, without answering it as you ought.”

Ap Thomas utterly confounded and astonished at the Queen's discourse, and at her manner of delivering her last words, stood, for some moments, with his eyes fixed on the ground, in the posture of one wholly irresolute and undetermined what answer to make ; but that frankness and ingenuous sincerity of which he made profession, would not suffer him to be long silent.

After a considerable pause, " I am," said he " most sensible of the inestimable value of the happiness your Majesty offers me ; a happiness sufficient to render me completely glorious ! But I, who am only born to serve you at an awful distance, am constrained to think as the greatest of misfortunes, that which would be esteemed as the most sovereign felicity to any other.

This sentiment is so deeply engraven on my heart, that what effect soever the confession may produce, nothing can possibly ever stagger my resolutions.

The Queen highly incensed at the noble frankness of this answer; and, far from taking advantage of returning to her duty from so rare an example of virtue, she abandoned herself to all those inhuman sentiments, that rage and resentment could suggest to her imagination.

“Thou knowest my weakness,” said she, “but never hope to triumph with impunity over my shame, into which thy unjust, and ungenerous refusal has precipitated me! Thou shalt assuredly feel the effects of my hatred, since thou hast rendered thyself unworthy of my love!”

When she had said these words, she retired, in the utmost fury, into her closet, violently flinging the door after her, leaving ap Thomas in inexpressible astonishment.

Being somewhat come to himself, as he was advancing towards his lodgings, overwhelmed with dubious and perplexing thoughts, dreading the fatal consequences of this unhappy adventure, he met the King, who was going to the Queen, to desire her to take a walk with him. The King would have had him gone back, but he excused himself upon the pretext of having some urgent business to do.

He had certainly much better have been a witness to a conversation which was going to be held at his expence; his presence would have prevented the Queen from filling the soul of her cre-

dulous husband with suspicions. In effect, the King had no sooner entered her closet, but that dangerous enemy began to make most bitter complaints against ap Thomas, and did all she could to make the King comprehend, that the many compliments and arguments of profound respect, which that faithful domestic had always expressed for her, had something in them of a more tender nature, than the bare assurances of an ordinary zeal.

“ My lord,” said she, “ I would very willingly have concealed from you the concern with which my mind is agitated, as likewise the insolence of your favourite, but I protest, I have been under so great a surprize, at the thoughts of those things he has been endeavouring to make me understand, that I was not able to keep within my breast the just resentment his rashness

has caused. You yourself might have read in his countenance the emotions of his soul; and though his presumption did not reach so far as to declare the violence of the passion he has for me, yet he said enough to explain his thoughts, and to convince me of his intentions."

The King, who was naturally inclinable to be jealous and diffident, was touched to the quick with this artful discourse: he began to reflect upon the disturbance and confusion which he had observed in ap Thomas's looks, and made no scruple of believing him guilty of a treachery of the blackest and most unpardonable nature.

He knew not at first what resolution to take: every circumstance prompted him to take a most terrible vengeance: his honour, attacked him in so

sensible a part ; his confidence abused, and his freindship basely betrayed, seemed to have effaced from his heart all his past goodness and clemency, and to have changed his usual moderation into fury.

“ Madam,” said he, as he went away, “ you shall assuredly be revenged for this affront, which equally concerns us both.”

He was no sooner in his own apartment alone, but ap Thomas’s seeming ingratitude, presented itself to his imagination in the worst and darkest colours, inspired his breast with such violent emotions of rage and resentment, that he could scarce suppress them ; but, on the other side, the long experience he had of the probity and honorable character of his favorite, cast him into an irresolution much

easier to be imagined than described ; and having also had sufficient time to reflect, that the Queen's account was hitherto grounded upon no surer foundation than bare suspicion, which, notwithstanding the plausible appearance of its probability, might still be thought dubious, he resolved therefore to be thoroughly confirmed in an affair, which so nearly concerned him, before he wholly gave way to the dictates of passion.

After having maturely weighed several expedients, he was of opinion, that the best method he could take, was to make as if he determined to banish ap Thomas out of his dominions ; not in the least doubting, but that, if this unfortunate gentleman was conscious of any guilt, he would, without murmuring, acquiesce to that sentence, which he was about to ac-

quaint him with by a messenger, as well knowing, that an offence of that nature merited a treatment much more rigorous: but, on the contrary, if he was innocent, he would try all methods to justify himself from that unworthy accusation. With this consideration the King immediately sent Lord Broke, to let him know his pleasure and resolution, concerning his banishment.

Ap Thomas was not surprized at this order, though it gave him great affliction: and, without hesitation he firmly determined rather to lose his life, than submit to a sentence which would infallibly leave his innocence unjustified, and always suspected.

By the earnest arguments and intreaties he used, he prevailed with Lord Broke to intercede for him with the King, that he might have the

liberty granted him to go and cast himself at his feet, and there justify himself, or die with regret for having fallen under his displeasure.

Lord Broke, who was his intimate and sincere friend, painted ap Thomas's resolution and despair so naturally and in such pathetic terms, that the King, who sought nothing more than to be pressed and importuned on that subject, at last consented, permitting him to come into his presence to plead his own defence, and, if possible, to prove his innocence: but to intimidate him, he assumed a severe countenance, ready to reproach him with a crime, the truth of which he could not help doubting.

During this interval, ap Thomas, who was fully persuaded that the Queen had exasperated the King to the high-

est extremity of fury, was in the greatest perplexity and agony imaginable. With despair he foresaw that it would be altogether impossible to attempt any thing for its justification, without turning all the malignity of the Queen's accusation upon herself: but at the same time to turn the dagger's point to his sovereign's heart! to revenge his wrongs in so mean, so cowardly, so ungenerous a manner! to create confusion, and an irreconcilable breach between them, when his duty, and his gratitude engage him by such sacred ties! all these reflections, so natural to a man of honour, obliged him to conceal an odious and detested truth, and to leave his justification to his innocence alone.

With this noble and generous resolution, which he as resolutely maintained, he presented himself before his sove-

reign. It was to no purpose for the King to endeavour to raise his resentment, by uttering the most cruel and bitter reproaches; nothing he could say being capable of shocking his intrepid soul, or of staggering him in his glorious determination.

Almost drowned in tears, he cast himself at his feet:—"I am guilty my liege," said he, "not of the base and unpardonable crime, of which I have been accused, but of not being so happy as to have found sufficient occasions of giving you proofs of my sincerity, and of the excess of my zeal: had you been entirely satisfied with the full extent of my unfeigned integrity, and unfeigned fidelity, you would, doubtless, have yourself defended, and justified me, against all suspicions, even against those which carry the face of the greatest proba-

bility. Punish me, my liege," continued he, with the utmost vehemence, "punish me for the disorder and uneasiness my misfortune creates in your soul ! In that indeed I am truly culpable : but cease I beseech you to reproach and accuse me of a crime, the very thought of which makes my soul shudder with horror ! I never lifted up my eyes towards the Queen but with the profoundest awe and veneration ; and if my unhappy destiny had ever made me conceive the least inclination or desire, too presumptuous for me to entertain, death itself would soon have stifled it, and put an end to my weakness, and my confusion."

The King could in no wise be satisfied with these arguments, which appeared to him so mysterious and obscure.

“ You still persist in abusing my goodness,” said he, “ in endeavouring to impose upon me by the appearance of virtue : but I am too much injured and offended to be contented with words, which may equally serve both for the innocent and the guilty : I must have more convincing proof, or prepare yourself for the effects of my just resentment.”

“ Yes, my liege, I will satisfy you,” replied ap Thomas, “ since you put my discretion to so cruel a trial ; I will ingenuously avow, that I love, I adore the most perfect work, the masterpiece of nature, and that I have done so for several years ; a pleasing, soothing, mystery, conceals from the eyes of the whole universe, the most faithful, the most tender, and the most inviolable flame the world ever produced.”

“Is it possible,” cried the King, “Is it possible that you can entertain so violent a passion for any but the Queen? Ah! what would I give to be thoroughly convinced of your innocence! Explain to me this mystery, which, in justifying you, will restore back to you all my former love and friendship!”

“Ah! Sire,” replied ap Thomas, “what do you ask of me? exact not from me the confession of a secret, upon which the future happiness of my whole life depends, and which would render me guilty of the basest and most ungenerous indiscretion in the world: content yourself, I beseech you, with knowing, that I am engaged to her whom I adore, by such solemn, endearing, and inviolable bonds, that nothing but death itself is capable of breaking.”

“ But who will answer,” interrupted the King, “ for the truth of what you assert ?”

“ My honor and my faith,” replied ap Thomas : “ depend upon them, my Sovereign, and do not force me, I beg of you, to commit a real treachery, in order to expiate an imaginary one, whereby, in endeavouring to wash away the stain of a false crime which has been laid to my charge, I shall eternally forfeit my honor, by violating and breaking through the most solemn ties in nature.”

Notwithstanding the King began to stagger, he would certainly have fully satisfied his curiosity, but that one of his attendants, at that very instant, came hastily in, to inform him, that a messenger had arrived to transact business of importance with him.

“Retire, ap Thomas,” said the King to him; “go, and prepare to make me the discovery and confession, which I absolutely insist upon, and from which nothing shall excuse you: it is at that price I set the liberty I suffer you to enjoy: in the meanwhile you may continue at court: I will prevail upon the Queen to let you stay.”

The generous ap Thomas, whom an excess of fortune’s liberality had rendered unfortunate, departed to his own home, full of acknowledgement, for the greatness of the King’s bounty, on one hand; but, on the other, overwhelmed with grief and perplexing reflexions. He, without difficulty, foresaw, that the Queen would never stop at this her first attempt; nor did he make any doubt, but that in the end, he must infallibly fall a victim to

the redoubled efforts of so very dangerous an enemy ; and this tormenting idea caused such violent agitations, as banished all repose. He passed the night under the most cruel doubts and apprehensions ; and the next day, when the hour came which obliged him to repair to the palace, the same agonizing thoughts accompanied him thither, without being able to discover in Henry's countenance, whether or not he still retained the same fatal prejudice he had before.

After having performed all the duties of his charge, he was about to return home, when in the way he received a letter from a person, who retired with so much haste, or rather precipitation, that he could by no means learn from whence it came.

He made all haste he could, that he might solve this mystery, and was no sooner arrived in his apartment, but, opening the billet, he found these words :—

“ For this once you have triumphed ; but hope not to be always victorious ; resentment and indignation are still preparing fresh encounters for you : you will undoubtedly fall their victim, except you have recourse to love to espouse your cause : Think on what you deserve, and from thence you may know how to guess at what you ought to fear : Bellona or Venus are prepared to receive you ; take your choice.”

Ap Thomas had no great difficulty to comprehend that this billet came from the Queen ; but the alternate propo-

sals which were made him therein, could be no inducement to stagger him in the just resolution he had taken.

That princess had made a show of being appeased, when the King had given her an account of the whole conversation he had held with the person whom she was endeavouring to ruin. She had, at her leisure, seriously reflected on her hasty proceedings, and with what promptitude she had accused a man she so ardently loved, and how little prospect there was of touching his heart by such cruel and inhuman methods. She nevertheless was glad that she had not carried her accusation so far, as the violence of her passion would at first have forced her to do; and now made no manner of scruple in imagining, that perhaps she had laid a wrong construction upon ap Thomas's expressions, which, it was

probable, might proceed purely from an excess of zeal and respect.

The King, who desired nothing but to enjoy a calm and quiet mind, was exceedingly pleased to leave her in a state of sedateness and tranquillity; but the confession ap Thomas had made of his entertaining a secret amour, would infallibly have raised another furious storm in the breast of the Queen, had not her heart flattered her imagination with the idea of his having made use of that artifice, purely to disengage himself adroitly from the too pressing importunity and curiosity of the King: nor could she avoid being sensibly touched at the discretion he had shown, in regard of a person whose proceedings deserved so little at his hands. Her soul was softened with the reflections of an action so generous, and she immediately began

to be inspired both with compassion and acknowledgments. But she did not long entertain those just and commendable sentiments. She had flattered herself with fancying, that ap Thomas would have taken advantage of the many opportunities she gave him of addressing himself to her in private; but, on the contrary, having taken notice of the small effect her note had made upon his heart, and the great care he took to avoid her, she soon felt her former fury beginning to revive in her soul and with greater violence than before, as it was increased by that fiend jealousy; inso-much, that soon returning to her first revengeful design, she had recourse to the basest and most unworthy artifices imaginable, in order to bring them about.

That expedient which first presented itself to her imagination, seemed to her to be irresistibly infallible. She doubted not, if she feigned herself to be pregnant, but that the King, charmed and overjoyed at that welcome news, would grant to the impetuosity of her desires, whatsoever she should pretend to wish for, and that by these means she could not fail of pouring down inevitable destruction upon the head of that ungrateful man, who slighted and despised her love.

It is very easy to imagine the transports the King felt, when this subtle and deceitful woman inspired him with so flattering an expectation: his passion for her increased every moment, and his heart but too sensible of a blessing he was long wishing for, redoubled his complaisance towards her, and made him endeavour, by the most magnificent

entertainments and diversions of gallantry, to return her some share of the great pleasure she gave him.

For a considerable time nothing was to be seen but feasts and festivals; and every one strove, with the greatest emulation, to manifest to the King how sensible a part all his subjects bore in his satisfaction, and happiness: ap-
 Thomas alone, among all those numbers, was constrained, purely through decency and good manners, to join in that universal rejoicing. He readily surmised, that this conception, this breeding of the Queen's, whether real or counterfeit, was only the forerunner of his ruin: he was perfectly well acquainted with Henry's character; and from the revengeful temper, and the malignity of Elizabeth, he had great cause to fear all things. He had but too fatal proofs of the truth of these

conjectures; and that dangerous female was too successful in the advantage she took of the increase of the King's passion and complaisance for her, and with which she had so artfully inspired him.

One day, as the King was with her, pouring out his protestations, that now nothing was wanting to compleat his happiness, since he was upon the point of having so dear a pledge of her love; "I cannot persuade myself," said she, with a languishing look, "that you can possibly have so extraordinary a tenderness and passion for me, as you take such pains in endeavouring to make me believe: the heir you are in expectation of, is all that pleases you in me: of this I have but too plain demonstration, by the small regard you have expressed to the complaints I some time since made to you against ap

“ Thomas. That insolent favourite of
 “ your’s triumphs over me; and the
 “ favour you shew that minion, con-
 “ strains me to suffer affronts of so
 “ gross a nature, and to seem satisfied,
 “ purely to please you; for, in short,
 “ I have no longer any room to doubt
 “ of his presumptuous temerity: his
 “ eyes have two clearly confirmed
 “ what he would utter with his mouth;
 “ but you have suffered yourself to be
 “ deluded by a few fallacious and de-
 “ ceitful words, and have taken that
 “ fictitious and ridiculous story of the
 “ imaginary amour he invented, as a
 “ sufficient excuse.

“ For what reason else, my Lord,
 “ should he have concealed from your
 “ knowledge the real object of this
 “ secret passion, had not his audaci-
 “ ousness inspired him to entertain
 “ that passion for me? It it naturally

“ probable, that he could be able so
 “ to blind the eyes of a whole court,
 “ who are so attentive in observing all
 “ his motions, as to prevent the dis-
 “ covery of his assiduity and addresses
 “ to that person who was really mis-
 “ tress of his heart? Cease therefore,”
 continued she, “ to let yourself be so
 “ grossly imposed upon, and make a
 “ thorough examination into a mys-
 “ tery, wherein your honour is so nearly
 “ concerned: compel your favourite to
 “ name the person with whom he is
 “ in love: if he complies it will be
 “ easy to distinguish truth from fiction;
 “ but if he refuses, and continues ob-
 “ stinate in his silence, you may be
 “ assured, that it is I myself who am
 “ the sole object of his rash and pre-
 “ sumptuous passion.”

Henry, during this discourse, by
 examining within himself into the pro-

bability of every circumstance, began
 to be so fully convinced, that he blamed
 and condemned his weakness, in being
 so credulous as to give ear and be led
 away with such fallacious appearances.
 This reflection having taken a sudden
 possession of his mind he said to her,
 “ You are entirely in the right, Ma-
 “ dam: my too easy blindness had led
 “ me into error: but, heaven be prais-
 “ ed, your counsels will assist me in
 “ repairing my fault; and I should,
 “ before now, have penetrated into this
 “ secret which appears of such im-
 “ portance to me, if you had not
 “ seemed to be cured of your former
 “ suspicions. I will force ap Thomas
 “ to explain the whole matter in very
 “ clear terms; and if he makes the
 “ least hesitation in giving me that
 “ satisfaction, he must certainly ex-
 “ pect to feel the most violent effects
 “ of my just resentment.”

When this conversation was ended, the King left her, and went to give orders for making preparations for a grand fête.

After a magnificent entertainment, they retired into the forest adjoining, to partake of a rural ball: the ladies were habited in extreme magnificence, which added new charms to their natural beauty; and the nobility upon that occasion, emulated each other in the gallant appearance of their magnificent habits. Indeed, nothing could have added to the beauty of this noble assemblage, or have rendered it more compleat, but the presence of the lovely Lady Murray: but a slight indisposition had confined her to her country retirement, nor was she sorry for having that pretext to excuse her absence.

The whole company were dispersed here and there in every part of the forest: but the King, that day, forgot the great love and inclination he naturally used to have for that sport; and ordering ap Thomas to follow him, he went to a fountain side, where he sat down, and commanded his favourite to do the same. His air was extremely gloomy, and he appeared to be thoughtful, with his eyes full of indignation and choler; nor was it very difficult for the unhappy ap Thomas to comprehend, that he was going to stand the brunt of a new storm. At last the King broke silence, and, in an angry tone, fiercely said,

“ It is not just nor reasonable that you
 “ should any longer disturb the happiness and repose of my life. The hopes
 “ I am in of soon seeing myself blessed
 “ with an heir, would set me upon the
 “ highest summit of earthly felicity,

“ did not you, and you alone, poison
 “ all its sweetness. You must take
 “ your choice,” continued he, in a
 still more elevated tone of voice, “ ei-
 “ ther to lose my friendship, my con-
 “ fidence, and perhaps your life, or,
 “ without hesitation, to tell me the
 “ name of the person who is mistress
 “ of your affections, with the whole
 “ history of your amour. My honour
 “ demands your obedience, since a
 “ suspicion can never be effaced out
 “ of the soul of a sovereign, by any
 “ thing but blood or sincerity. Speak
 “ therefore, and render yourself either
 “ worthy of my friendship, or of my
 “ hatred.”

“ Sire,” answered ap Thomas re-
 spectfully, “ I would much sooner con-
 “ sent to lose my life than to discover
 “ my secret, if by my death I could
 “ convince you of my innocence.

“ Your goodness staggers my constancy, more than the horrors of the cruellest tortures can possibly do. It fills my soul with despair, to see that my unhappy destiny makes me the fatal instrument of disturbing your tranquillity. To you it is I owe my all; and yet, by a false representation, I appear guilty of a base ingratitude. Well, my King, to convince you of my untainted fidelity, of my sincerity, and of my grateful acknowledgements for your bounties, I am going to make you a declaration of the only thing upon which the happiness of my whole life entirely depends: but if I may be permitted to exact from you a solemn oath, never to reveal to any one whomsoever the secret I shall commit to your trust, I shall esteem that condescension as the greatest of all the innumerable favours you

“ have so graciously bestowed upon
“ me.”

“ Fear nothing,” replied Henry impatiently, “ I swear by all I esteem
“ most sacred, that I will keep what-
“ ever you shall tell me, with an in-
“ violable secrecy.”

“ Since you have the bounty to give
“ me such an assurance,” answered ap-
Thomas, “ I am ready, by a sincere
“ and faithful confession, to set your
“ mind at ease, and to restore your
“ heart to its wonted calmness.”

At these words, after having continued silent for a moment or two, to recal to his memory some particulars, he began his relation in the following terms.

CHAP. III.

“ BY the consequence of the secret which I am going to impart to you, you will, doubtless, acknowledge, my liege, what confidence I have in your generosity, and how sincerely I am devoted to you; since in so doing, I both forget and violate my most sacred vows, and betray the loveliest, the most divine of women, who has not her equal in the universe, and purely to contribute to your repose. Your majesty will be more easily convinced of this truth, when you are informed, that

notwithstanding the tender love and friendship there ever was between my brother and me, yet he is wholly ignorant of any part of this sacred mystery. Prepare yourself, therefore, if you please, to hear me make frequent mention of several public occurrences with which your majesty is perfectly acquainted; but those circumstances bear a connection so very necessary to my particular adventures, that I cannot conveniently omit any one of them.

“I confess then, Sire, that I was acquainted with love almost as soon as I was acquainted with myself: that most beautiful woman, Lady Caroline Murray inspired me with a sensibility of that soothing passion, even in my very infancy, and which has since grown to an ardour the strongest and most inviolable that can be conceived.”

At these words the countenance of the King appeared very much altered, showing, great marks of surprize, blended with those of pleasure; but being unwilling to interrupt ap Thomas in his relation, he made signs for him to proceed.

“ Pardon my rashness, my King,” continued he, “ it has made me guilty of entertaining thoughts too presumptuous and aspiring; but impetuous emotions and impulses of love have but little room for reflection; and as your Majesty must be aware, I was so very young when I first began to feel the force of this irresistible flame; I hope that consideration will plead my excuse.”

“ Your highness knows that the charming Caroline Howard was educaetd at court; and that from her cradle she gave

her fond parents the most sanguine hopes, by the extraordinary perfections of her person, and the uncommon vivacity of her wit. The bounties with which Edward the Fourth was pleased to honour my father, gave my brother and myself an easy access to the palace, and I had often the honour of being admitted to the presence of the young princesses when they were amusing themselves with diversions agreeably to their years. From those frequent visits, which my youth authorised, that flame, which can never be extinguished but with my life, first began to kindle in my heart. The young Caroline inspired me with sentiments, the meaning or cause of which I was perfectly ignorant. I was sensible of nothing, but of the pleasure I felt in being near her, the satisfaction and happiness I found in her society; and I never knew uneasiness but in her absence.

“I will not, my sovereign, make a recital of the trifling particulars of our infancy, how charming soever their ideas are still to *my* memory, since they must, doubtless, be tiresome and uninteresting to your majesty; but shall briefly inform your majesty of those particulars which carry with them the firmest conviction of the excess of my love. The little assiduities I used in my officious attendance upon the young Caroline, seemed to have made some impression on her heart. With what transport did I observe that she was not insensible to the care that I took to please her! With what joy did hope whisper to my heart, that she at last would be mine! Then I was really happy; we passed some years in an uninterrupted state of happiness. It is true, we had not sufficient experience to distinguish the real cause of our felicity and the sweetness of our innocent

sympathy; but nevertheless, we tasted, without disturbance or constraint, the pleasure of loving one another, and of being almost inseparable. But, alas! this agreeable tranquillity was at last interrupted, and I perceived that my soul began to be possessed with sentiments far more lively than those I knew before.

“ It was upon the occasion of a grand tournament given by his Majesty Edward, that love, by far different emotions from those I had already felt, made me thoroughly sensible that I was about to sacrifice my happiness for the repose of the first years of my life. I was not at that time sixteen, and I was flattered by many that I might have hope for success in those exercises to which I had vigorously applied myself, as well to render myself the more acceptable to the beautiful Caroline,

as inspired with the same emulation that reigned in the breast of several of our noblemen who had been my school-fellows and companions. His majesty had issued an order, that all the knights who intended to enter the lists, should maintain and defend the beauty and perfections of their respective mistresses. Every one strove with the greatest emulation to out-vie each other in the preparation, they made to appear with the utmost magnificence and splendour upon that solemn occasion. My father, who, rather out of a point of honour, than from any other motive, was likewise making ready to be present at that festival among the rest, happened to be taken ill; and notwithstanding his indisposition was neither dangerous nor very considerable, it being, however, sufficient to deter him from appearing in the lists, Edward chose him to officiate as one of the judges of the field.

As for me, I was so unfortunate as to have not encouragement to claim any share in an affair which would have so agreeably flattered my inclination; when some days before the time that had been fixed on for the tournament, I went as usual to the palace, and going into the apartment where the young princesses generally amused themselves some hours of the day, I was extremely mortified and surprized at not finding Caroline among them, and more so when I was told, that, contrary to her custom, she had declined to quit her apartment, and that no persuasion of their's could prevail on her to join them in their diversions. I ran to her chamber, as I had always enjoyed that liberty, and found her extremely uneasy and dejected; her countenance exhibited such tokens of melancholy and uneasiness as quite confounded and amazed me.

“ ‘ What cause can retain my dear Caroline in this solitude?’ said I, ‘ What can occasion this gloominess, which I observe upon you? Conceal it not from *me*, I beseech you; for you must be convinced that I would joyfully sacrifice, if possible, a thousand lives to convince the lovely Caroline how much I adore her!’

“ At these words my charming Caroline, somewhat recovered herself from that thoughtfulness which oppressed her, and casting on me a look full of tenderness, said ‘ I am well assured, that I have no friend more sincere than yourself; but I am very sensible, at the same time, that it is not in your power to dissipate my present melancholy, reason indeed may do something; but, continued she with a vehemence that astonished me, ‘ I am yet too young to follow it’s dictates.’

“ ‘ How exquisitely happy, my Caroline,’ said I, hastily interrupting her, ‘ should I think myself, if you would eternally reject the arguments, though specious, which that cruel reason may suggest to the prejudice of my passion!’

“ She was too much occupied with her inward chagrin, to give much regard to the tenderness or anxiety of my expressions.

“ ‘ I should be scrupulous,’ resumed Caroline, ‘ of discovering to every one the subject of my concern; but I repose so great a confidence in your friendship, that I will confess to you, without being any wise apprehensive of the raillery I am conscious I deserve, that I am piqued in a very sensible manner, that my immature years prevent any of the Knights of

our court from undertaking to break a lance in my name, or for my sake.'

“ ‘ My lovely Caroline !’ said I, ‘ let me intreat you not to grieve on that account ; I should be unworthy of you if my love did not furnish me with some means of contenting you. I will maintain against *all* mankind, that you *alone* deserve the prize, and I will defy any that may have the temerity to dispute it to your prejudice: do me the honour of accepting me for your Knight ; trust me with that glorious charge, and your eyes shall be the witnesses, that notwithstanding my want of years, the ardour of my passion will enable me to maintain the glory of so noble a choice, and prove that youth is not incompatible with valour.’ ”

“ Notwithstanding she visibly enough, appeared to be touched with a discourse,

which flattered her desires, and drew a smile into her before saddened features; she obligingly refused my proposal, with a judgment, and in terms far above her years. Indeed I ought not to have been discontented, since her only reason for opposing my wishes proceeded from her apprehension for my safety. She appeared conscious that some accident would be the result of my exposing myself to such danger: vanquished at last by my pressing importunities, she reluctantly consented to receive that token of my love, condescending to give me so delicate a proof of the confidence she reposed in me; but at the same time, extorted from me a solemn promise, that whatever success should befall my enterprise, the motive which had engaged me to undertake it, should most religiously be kept an eternal secret from all the world.

“ Her permission caused in me a transport of joy, which seemed to augur to my youthful heart the victory; and that I should have the unspeakable happiness of laying the envied prize at her feet. I then began to collect my thoughts, and from that moment they were employed in making the necessary preparation for that magnificent festival; and they were conducted with the greatest privacy. I was soon furnished with the means, the armour, and all the rest of its appurtenances, which my father had had made for himself, being now, in consequence of his illness, useless to him; I resolved to wear it at the tournament. Being of good stature, for my age, my father’s armour fitted me with the greatest nicety. I shall not, Sire, enter into a detail of the particulars of the festival, as your Majesty is already too well acquainted with the magnificence

shown on those occasions: but shall proceed in my narrative. The tournament began a considerable time before I ventured to appear, as I had determined on attacking the conqueror; when, observing that neither of the champions was able to withstand the vigour and good fortune of the Duke of Albany, I had the temerity to advance, brandishing my lance, into the lists, and to bid him defiance. I had leisure enough to get engraved upon my shield, the representation of Hebe the Goddess of Youth, encompassed with Cupids, together with that of Cytherea seeming in despair for that preference: round the shield I caused to be engraven in large characters,

VENUS YIELDS TO HEBE.

“ The Duke of Albany received me with that address and intrepidity so natural to him: but my good fortune prevail-

ed in an eminent degree, for in the three encounters which we made, according to custom, he could not gain the least advantage over me. As we had both supported these encounters with a degree of spirit that astonished the beholders, it was now deemed necessary to draw our swords, which likewise, according to the laws of tournaments, ought to terminate at three bouts: but the Duke, meeting with a resistance, to which he had not been accustomed, and which no doubt he did not expect when he saw his young antagonist, he went beyond the ordinary rules, and engaged me with an animosity, which had like to have proved fatal to us both; for the Duke charged with such force and spirit, that I was obliged to rally all my strength and activity to receive him. I had the good fortune to run him through the thigh; but he, finding the weakness of my armour in one

place, passed his sword quite through my body. I fell from my horse into the arms of my father; who, with the other judges of the field, came running to part us.

“ Your Majesty can readily conceive the agony and surprize of my father, who having put down my beaver, of course, instantly recognized me. Such was the violence of my father’s grief and despair, that it appeared to have made a great impression on the mind of Edward; for his Majesty expressed great sorrow and concern at so fatal an accident. I was carried off the ground, and for a considerable time my life was despaired of; but at length, through the unremitting attention of my father and others, and the strength of the cordials that were administered to me, I opened my eyes and soon after recovered the use of all my faculties.

Those about me, when they saw that I was completely restored to my senses, expressed the most tender anxiety for me, and wished to know the motives that induced me to so rash and so inconsiderate an undertaking; I was about to reply, when the surgeons interfered and begged I would not exert myself, and insisted that no more questions should be put to me till they had probed and dressed my wound a second time.

“ Will your highness believe me, when I dare have the assurance to affirm to you, that the terrible condition in which I then was, caused me to be sensible of a certain pleasure and easiness of mind, far exceeding the pain I felt, or the danger with which my life was threatened. I had given some proof of my courage, and, at the same time, made my lovely Caroline sensi-

ble to what a degree of passion I adored her: my only disquiet, proceeded from a wish to know what effect it had produced in her heart; but it was not long before I had that satisfaction.

“ After the surgeons had unanimously given their opinion, that my wound, though very dangerous, was not mortal; his Majesty, Edward, most graciously condescended to honour me with a visit, and at the same time anxiously hoped that life would be spared to so young and so courageous a youth. His Majesty was pleased to flatter me, but these were his exact words, I still perfectly well remember that having first blamed my foolish rashness, he commended my generous boldness; the sole motive whereof appeared to him, to be an emulation of acquiring honour: the whole court echoed the sentiments and examples

of his Majesty; however, the gallant device with which I had adorned my shield, occasioned several persons to hesitate, and they debated among themselves, what possible construction they could put upon it; at length, they applied to me for an explanation to my singular motto; but I, so positively, and with such seeming ingenuous sincerity, maintained, that the representation of Hebe, was no other than an allusion to my own youth, that I at length persuaded the most incredulous.

“ A few days after, the young princesses, who were brought up in his Majesty’s palace, conducted by Lady Serville, honoured me likewise with a visit; and among them, came the beautiful Caroline.

“ After the first compliments, my father being busy in entertaining Lady Serville in discourse, the Lady Caroline approached my bed-side; and while the other young ladies were agreeably amusing themselves with looking upon the device of my shield, she had an opportunity to tell me, that she was very sensible of what I had done for her sake.

“ ‘ You have hazarded your life,’ added she, ‘ but be assured, that my acknowledgments is nothing inferior to the gallantry of the action you undertook with a view of pleasing me.’

“ ‘ Most adorable Caroline,’ answered I, ‘ this acknowledgment which you make me, is assuredly very soothing, and flattering to my imagination; and eases my heart of a great part of its burthen, but I did not labour so

much to obtain that, as I did to touch your heart, with still more tender sentiments.'

" ' I see plainly enough,' interrupted Caroline, with a smile, ' that it is as difficult for you to moderate your valour in the field, as your ardour in attacking the ladies; but, in a word ap Thomas, think of recovering your health, in which I must own myself to be somewhat interested: you have found the means of making it not indifferent to me: oblige me to say no more on this subject; a longer conversation will be equally prejudicial to your recovery, and to what I owe to myself.'

" At these words she retired from my bed-side, and joined the princesses, who for some moments longer amused

themselves with examining my armour, and then departed.

“ The goodness of my constitution, together with the satisfaction of my mind, soon produced a very favourable change: the fever left me, my strength returned, and in a few days I found myself in a condition to leave my bed, and, not long after, my chamber.

“ My first care was, to return his Majesty thanks for the condescending goodness wherewith he had vouchsafed to honour me; after which I flew to the chamber of the dear dear object of my affections.

“ ‘ My charming Caroline,’ said I, throwing myself at her feet, ‘ I come to tender you an offer of that life which your goodness has preserved: you have rendered it so valuable by

employing it in your service, that it would be little less than inhumanity to destroy your own workmanship.'

“ ‘It would be happy for me,’ replied Caroline, (obliging me to rise, with a sweetness in her looks which quite delighted me), ‘if indeed I had contributed to your recovery: I, too imprudently, caused you to expose your life, not to avow to you that I see you again with pleasure; but I must still make you a farther confession; the danger into which I inconsiderately led you, would have soon proved equally fatal to both of us, had you miscarried; since I could not possibly have enjoyed a moment’s happiness for my having precipitated you into so evident a peril. My unwary youth prevented me from reflecting on the consequences of an enterprize, to which I so rashly gave my consent; yet, after all,

you ought not to entertain the worse opinion of me upon that account, since it has furnished you with so good an opportunity of displaying that personal courage, which you possess in a supereminent degree.'

" ' Ungenerous woman !' replied I, ' it belongs to the world to applaud my courage, if I have been so fortunate as to shew any : but grant me the permission to tell you, that you are in the wrong to counsel me to have regard for any other happiness of life, than that where love is immediately concerned : that deity alone was my guide ; and I should have reason to complain of him, if he should suffer you to take upon yourself what he forcibly compelled me to do for your sake.'

" ' These distinctions are of a very delicate nature,' interrupted Caroline,

smiling; ‘ but indeed I love you too much, to leave you in doubt of my thoughts concerning your conduct in this affair. Know then, Reuben, that I am neither ungenerous nor ungrateful; the action you have performed for my sake, carries with it a character so passionate, that in exposing to my view the utmost extent of its meaning, it opens my eyes, and gives me sentiments of which my want of years, till this moment, had prevented me from feeling the consequences.

“ ‘ I wholly depend upon a parent, who is extremely jealous of his honour and dignity, who undoubtedly designs me for some person of a very high and distinguish’d rank; and, though, perhaps, I shall force my inclination in so doing, yet it is my duty to obey him, whatever may be his commands. What hopes, then, can you entertain from a fruitless

passion? Prepare yourself therefore, my dear ap Thomas, to see me curb, to see me stifle an inclination, which I cannot help confessing to you, that even my character, my honour itself, will never be able wholly to eradicate.'

" Your Majesty may easily conceive the effect this speech had upon me; it deprived me for some moments of the power of utterance; at length, I recovered myself; but, as I was preparing to return an answer to a discourse so obliging, and at the same time so cruel: a death-blow to my passion, since it deprived me of all my earthly hopes of happiness; one of her female attendants appeared to inform her that his Majesty wished to see her in his apartment. I took my leave of the lovely Caroline, overwhelmed with grief at her discourse, tempered with admiration at the sentiments she expressed,

though incompatible with my happiness.' I found them so agreeable to those she ought to entertain, that I sighed as much for not being able, reasonably to condemn them, as I did at the thoughts of the obstacle they were likely to be to my future repose."

It being late, Henry desired ap Thomas to retire to his apartment to rest, and on the morrow to recommence his narrative.

CHAP. IV.

THE next day ap Thomas renewed the recital of his narrative, as follows:

“ The Lady Caroline from that day, began to avoid me; she insensibly debarred me from those privileges, which, until then, my youth had permitted me to enjoy. I perceived it, without having it in my power to blame her conduct; on the contrary, it caused emotions of admiration; for, from

thence forward I was condemned to sigh without complaining.

“ The death of Edward the Fourth took place at that time ; the grief for the decease of so benevolent a sovereign, took so fast a hold of my spirits, that I for some time forgot my own sorrows, in lamenting the death of so excellent a monarch.

“ Little occurred until the death of Edward the Fifth and the subsequent usurpation of the throne by Richard Duke of Gloucester, with the title of Richard the Third : my father in order to avoid his anger was obliged to appear at court ; as well knowing his life would be the price of his disobedience. The Lady Caroline also kept her residence at court, but she avoided me, if

not more, as much as she did before the death of the good King Edward.

“ Two years elapsed under this unsupportable constraint, my eyes being all that time the only interpreters of my heart: and I sometimes read in those of that adorable woman, that she was a partaker of the pain imposed upon us by a too rigorous duty: but, alas! how weak and imperfect a consolation was that to a heart inflamed like mine!

“ At the same time, to complete my despair, my father, without consulting my inclination, took a resolution to marry me to Helen Beauchamp, the daughter of Sir Roger Beauchamp, who might with justice have passed for the most beautiful lady of the whole

court, had not the enchanting Caroline been its principal ornament.

“ Richard was consulted upon the affair: he gave his consent: thinking by that means to strengthen his party, not in the least suspecting, that my father did it merely to keep away his anger. It was not till that moment, that I had the smallest idea of the yoke which was intended for me; and when my father mentioned it to me as a thing entirely resolved upon, and which was to be concluded in a very few days, judge, Sire, how much must be his surprise to find me give an absolute and determined refusal to accept of the advantages he offered me, together with so agreeable a person as Helen.

“ It availed him little to lay before me the honour of such an alliance: the advantages our family would receive from such an union. He likewise painted in glowing colours the just resentment an illustrious family like that of Helen’s would entertain at my refusal. I remained firmly and irrevocably fixed in my first resolution, determined not to sacrifice my happiness, notwithstanding the parental authority my father endeavoured to exert, in order to bring me to a compliance.

“ When my father found that his reasoning and arguments were of no avail, that I still obstinately refused, he went so far as to prevail with his majesty to let me know the part he condescended to take in my concerns. His majesty did it with candour and

lenity. Caroline herself had likewise the cruelty to press me to it ; but methought, upon that occasion, I observed that her *words* were not in unison with the sentiments of her *heart*.

“ In answer to those pressing solicitations, I so vigorously alledged my want of years, and the little inclination I had for a married life, that I had not only my father’s indignation to encounter, but likewise the sharp resentment of the family of the house of Beauchamp. I made slight of all, valuing myself upon having given to Caroline a sincere and undoubted proof of my attachment.

“ I soon perceived the happy effect my resistance had upon the heart of that divine woman. I met her one

F 4

day

day coming from the apartment of his majesty.

“ ‘ Reuben,’ said she, somewhat hastily, as she passed by me, ‘ I am truly sensible of the whole merit of what you do on my account ; and feel highly flatter’d by the late sacrifice you have made ; but what advantage can you possibly reap from refusing the hand and fortune of the accomplished Helen Beauchamp ? None—all that you can expect to reap, is a fruitless pity. You refuse a tempting fortune, for a person who can never possibly be a sharer with you of any thing but your misfortunes.’

“ Having said this, she left me so precipitately, that I could return no answer.

“ I remained quite transported at those obliging expressions, and I blessed, a thousand times, the firmness of resolution which had occasioned them. But a crowd of melancholy reflections at the same instant obtruding themselves on my mind, soon made me sensible, that she, as tenderly sensible of my sufferings as she expressed herself to be, could not, like me, oppose absolute commands, and that it could not be long before some happy rival would deprive me of those slender remains of hope, which alone kept me alive.

“ That cruel moment came, and I felt all the tortures which I had but too certainly anticipated. Caroline's beauty, which was fast approaching that point of perfection it has since attained,

tained, brought me the most formidable rivals.

“ Lord Murray, encouraged by the high rank which he held at court, declared himself her admirer, and by his assiduities to please Caroline, and the magnificent fêtes he gave in honour of her, convinced the world of his passion and pretensions.

“ I was almost frantic at this fatal news; it reduced me to despair, in spite of the distant glimmering of hope I had clung to. The bare idea of seeing her whom I adored in the arms of another, quite surmounted my constancy, and overthrew the little fortitude I possessed. But, how much was my torture increased, when I heard that it was rumoured abroad, that Lord Murray had

obtained permission to address her for whom I sighed !

“ It was then that my fury grew outrageous. This discovery hurt me more than what I had already heard ; my rage knew no bounds ; a thousand horrors oppressed my mind, and I formed several violent resolutions against my rival’s life ! But reason, and love itself, soon convinced me that by entertaining such desperate and vain thoughts, I should not only injure the reputation of the object of my adoration, but likewise should be nothing happier, since it was more than probable that another would reap the fruits of my despair.

“ Caroline, who perceived my distress of mind, and the perplexity to

which I was reduced, seem'd to pity me, and by favorable looks, and some obliging expressions, to endeavour to restore a calm in my tempestuous breast.

“ The satisfaction of finding the goddess of my heart interest herself in my behalf, somewhat abated the impetuosity of my first agitation, and the arrival of several noblemen, my friends, helped still more to moderate my anguish : among them came Lords Montjoy and Selwyn.

“ The former, though otherwise not disagreeable in his person, had a ferocity and savageness in his countenance ; the latter, had something in his physiognomy which denoted the perfidy and deceit of his heart.

“ Both of these noblemen fell in love with Caroline, and gave splendid demonstrations of their increasing passion.

“ This powerful diversion gave me a satisfaction which a lover seldom enjoys upon the discovery of his rivals. I made no doubt but they would do their utmost to balance Lord Murray in his pretensions.

“ Indeed they neglected no expedient, no assiduity, in order to obtain the preference. Feasts, balls, and tournaments, became daily entertainments, and these three amorous and magnificent rivals, strove with all imaginable emulation which of them should carry off the contested prize. In short nothing was to be seen but gallantry: I, alone, plunged into an abyss of cha-

grin, solitarily sighed away my unhappy hours, with horror at the idea of what misery was to attend the remainder of my days ; for I made no doubt, but that one of my three rivals would be chosen.

“ I was so grievously tormented with these new ideas, that, unable to resist the racking uneasiness they gave me, I resolved to write to her ; which I did as follows.

“ ‘ Pity my sufferings, adorable Caroline ! do not I entreat you let me plead in vain. The love that I once cherished in my heart, is now about to conduct me to my grave. Despise me not I beseech you, but permit me to throw myself at your feet, and receive from your hands a token that you do not hate me.’

“ I put this billet in my pocket, with a design to deliver it to her ; and that same evening an opportunity offered.

“ A magnificent ball was appointed to be held in the palace, and the liberty every one had to go masked, gave me likewise the liberty of approaching my dear Caroline. I had the good fortune to make myself known to her, and to prevail with her to receive my billet. She took it with such dexterity, as precluded the possibility of any person perceiving it ; and under pretence of reading some verses which Lord Montjoy had procured to be made for her, I observed that she read what my love dictated ; after which by looks full of languishing tenderness, she let me see that she was not unmoved at my sufferings.

“ However these looks may have flattered my vanity, they did not convince me, that I should at last be happy in the possession of my Caroline. I knew not what to think, and in a state of the greatest anxiety, I retired to my chamber, pondering what construction I might put on this favourable reception of my billet.

“ I waited for the next day with the greatest impatience ; and that day, which I had flattered myself would have afforded me some consolation, nearly proved fatal to my life.

“ I expected, that at Lord Murray’s entertainment, who, in his turn, had prepared one with great magnificence for the Lady Caroline, I should by the same means, receive from her an answer, and with this view I repaired

to the palace masked, and as closely disguised as possible, in order to conceal myself from the knowledge of all but her to whom I determined to make myself known.

“ But she was so constantly occupied in conversation with those around her, that I had not an opportunity of putting my design into practice. When I was on the point of despairing of being able to get near her amidst that tumultuous assembly, I resolved to retire to an anti-room which adjoined the apartment, and through which she must pass when she retired from the ball-room, hoping that, through those means, I might have an opportunity of conversing with her.

“ I had been there some moments occupied with unpleasing reflections on my present situation, which obliged me to seek darkness and solitude, while my rivals enjoyed the liberty of making public profession of sentiments which could not possibly stand competition with the ardour and tenderness of mine, when two persons in masks, not perceiving me, entered the room, in conversation which they continued in low tones very near me, not knowing I was present.

“ As I easily knew them to be Lords Montjoy, and Selwyn, and as it is natural for every jealous lover to have a desire to penetrate into the secrets of his rivals, I was charmed at not being discovered. Lord Mont-

joy at last spoke in a louder tone, and proceeded with some impetuosity.

“ ‘ Our destinies, my Lord,’ said Montjoy, ‘ are precisely the same, and you have been informed by her father, I make no doubt, of the preference he gives to Lord Murray: I know not what effect his unworthy refusal has produced in your soul: for my part, I find myself transported with the most violent rage, and would immediately have given bloody proofs of my resentment, had I not expected more favourable sentiments from a person for whom we equally languish: but I have just discovered a secret; and find that her ingratitude to us, surpasses her father’s injustice: I heard that weak woman

give Lord Murray an assignation, ordering him to be to-morrow night at eight, in the avenue adjoining the grand entrance of the palace.'

" ' Ah! my Lord,' interrupted Selwyn, ' what is it you tell me! by this cruel discourse you but too much confirm the just suspicion raised in my breast upon account of a billet, which, some moments since, I took up as it fell from the bosom of Caroline, while she was dancing with Lord Murray.'

" Lord Montjoy took it, and drawing towards a small lamp, the only light in the room, he read sufficiently loud for me to hear the following, which is still fresh in my memory.

“ ‘ I do pity you, I am not displeased with you, calm your anguish : and to satisfy you to the utmost of my power, rest assured I commiserate your sufferings, and that for your sake, I am about to take a step which will convince you of my partiality for you.

CAROLINE.’

“ It is impossible for me to express to your Majesty what I felt at the reading of this note : Montjoy and Selwyn seemed little less uneasy.

“ They were preparing to go on with their discourse, which would, doubtless, have informed me of their pernicious designs, but at that moment, the eyes of Lord Montjoy en-

countered mine, and put an end to their conversation.

“ He immediately advanced fiercely towards me, and as it was my wish not to be discovered, I retreated, and got into the hall among the company, where he soon lost sight of me.

“ I retired to my home, plunged in a deeper despair than, in my whole life, I had ever felt before, fully persuaded that I had discovered a piece of the blackest treachery in the world.

“ Without the least hesitation I resolved to be at the place assigned for the meeting of the two lovers, and I passed the hours which preceded

that inauspicious moment, in the utmost impatience.

“ At length the time arrived when I was to fly to the fatal spot, where I was to be a witness of my wretchedness ; when there, I was obliged to seek concealment in an obscure part of the avenue.

“ You may easily conceive, Sire, the dreadful agitations under which I laboured while waiting for the coming of, as I supposed, that faithless woman.

“ Many times did suicide cross my mind, but was unheeded : I was tired of life, but had not sufficient courage to end it voluntarily.

“ The only thing capable of keeping me alive, was, the firm resolution I had taken to pierce the heart of my triumphant rival, and with the same dagger with which I should have sacrificed him to my just fury, to have put an end at once to my life and misfortunes.

“ My thoughts were deeply plunged in these melancholy ideas, when, casting my eyes towards the Palace, I beheld the cruel Caroline, with a precipitate step, advancing towards the place.

“ This seeming impatience of hers to be first at the place of rendezvous, redoubled my rage, and I am still at a loss to comprehend how I had so much command over myself as

to resist the inclination I felt, to quit my place of concealment, and reproach her for her ingratitude.

“ But the desire or curiosity which I had to hear what she could say to Lord Murray, detained me.

“ Caroline entered the avenue and not finding the person she expected, she sat down on a seat, and fell into a profound reverie. I observed all her motions, as much as what the light of the moon gave, would permit, and my jealousy persuaded me, that the tardiness of my rival, was the cause of the uneasiness under which she seemed to labour ; in a short time my attention was arrested by the appearance of Lord Murray whom I saw come in and cast himself at her feet. She made him rise,

with an indulgence that carried me to the highest fury, and was little short of depriving me of my reason ; and, to compleat my despair, I could hear little or nothing of their discourse, by reason of the distance I was from them.

“ As it was utterly impossible to hear I employed my eyes : and, from the least gestures, I imagined consequences, which I believed certainties ; and the prepossession of my soul was such, that I fancied Lord Murray was returning to Caroline a thousand grateful acknowledgements for her goodness to him. But at last my patience absolutely abandoned me, when I beheld that happy lover rashly fixing his presumptuous lips upon one of the fair hands of that faithless woman.

“ When I saw that, I no longer doubted of my ruin ; and as I was preparing to execute my fatal design, I saw two men enter the avenue, sword in hand, whom I instantly knew to be the Lords Montjoy and Selwyn.

“ They suddenly fell upon Lord Murray, and, before he had time to put himself on the defensive, they dangerously wounded him.

“ However, his courage soon overcame the sudden surprise into which he had been thrown by this assault, and made a gallant resistance to the attack of his base assassins.

“ Notwithstanding I had time enough to consider that I had it in my power to rid myself of these three rivals,

without appearing in the affair, I made not a moment's hesitation to follow the dictates of honour and generosity, and successfully placed myself by the side of Lord Murray, and had the happiness to assist him so effectually, that those unworthy Lords betook themselves to a precipitate flight.

“ Lord Murray, having no more enemies to encounter, turned towards me, and to testify his acknowledgement for the seasonable assistance I had given him, said,

“ ‘ I know not in what manner to thank you for the aid you have just lent me: in the mean while, my sensibility——’

“ He was unable to continue his discourse, his weariness, and the quantity

of blood which he had lost, having so weakened him, that he fell senseless at the feet of Caroline, who on her part was so filled with dread and consternation at this scene, that she had not the power to move from the spot where she seemed transfixed like a statue. I approached hert remblingly.

“ ‘ My dear Caroline,’ said I, ‘ let me entreat you to retire from this dreadful scene ; I will take care of this unfortunate Nobleman.’ ”

“ As she was about to follow my entreaty, we saw advancing towards us a number of people whom the clashing of swords had brought thither.

“ ‘ Fly Madam,’ said I, ‘ it is not proper that you should be found here,

and save yourself from the shame attendant on your discovery.'

" The astonished Caroline was about to retire, but Richard, followed by a number of domestics, arrived ere she could quit the spot ; his horror and surprise was beyond expression, as he has since declared to find Lord Murray weltering in his blood : to see that lovely woman, half dead, in a place, and at an hour, so extraordinary ; and to meet me, at the same time, with my sword drawn, standing by them ! All this, at first seemed to deprive his Majesty of the power of speech ; but anger immediately succeeding his surprise, he made no scruple of believing, that Lord Murray and myself had been engaged in a quarrel against each other, and that I had reduced him to the con-

dition in which he found him, and his Majesty, perhaps, suspected the virtuous Caroline of holding a criminal correspondence with me.

“ He fixed his eyes upon her with a look expressive of the rage that burned within him ; and commanded her to retire with a severity which pierced me to the very bottom of my heart, though at the same time, I thought her faithless.

“ I cast myself at his feet, in order to give him an exact account of all that had happened ; but the unhappy appearances which opposed our justification, prevented his Majesty from giving ear to my words.

“ By his order, I was dragged to prison, while Lord Murray was carried

to the palace. I perceived with grief, that my safety wholly depended upon his recovery : it being he alone who could attest my innocence.

“ Shall I confess what were my thoughts under these wretched circumstances ? The satisfaction of being justified for a crime laid to my charge with such convincing appearances of truth, seemed to me nothing in competition with the mortal chagrin of owing that justification to my rival.

“ Added to this I felt the bitterness of the unfortunate adventure : and that Caroline, in exculpating herself, in regard to the intelligence she might be suspected to hold with me, must be obliged to confess what she had done for Lord Murray.

“ ‘ Alas !’ cried I,’ the King, who, undoubtedly has approved of that Lord, will be highly gratified by the compliance of Caroline and her Father : they will be united, and I shall be declared innocent, only to be witness of an union so fatal to my future happiness.

“ I passed the night in these rack-
ing reflections ; but, alas ! all that I
had foreseen was confirmed in the
morning. My brother, whose regard
for me was tender and affectionate, was
the first who, by his Majesty’s order,
came to release me from my confine-
ment.

“ From him I understood, that some
hours after Lord Murray had been put
to bed, he, having recovered his speech,
had told Richard all that had passed

the preceding night, and that he had not only justified Caroline and me, but likewise had given him an account of the assistance I gave him, in terms that quite disconcerted me.

“ I was astonished and confounded at this proof of my rival’s honor and veracity, and was heartily sorry that I had thought so meanly of him. My brother likewise told me, that the treacherous Lords had precipitately left the court, and that Lord Selwyn, in the confusion of his flight, had left, upon the table in his closet, the billet which he had picked up at Lord Murray’s ball, and which had now fallen into the hands of one of the King’s household, named Johnson. He immediately suspected it to be written by Caroline, as he knew her hand by having seen some verses of

her writing, and had saved them, imagining they had been the cause of the late disorders.

“ But, Sire, admire my good fortune upon this occasion : my brother very happily for me, was acquainted with Johnson, who permitted him to return it to Caroline : I desired my brother to let me see it, and, upon perusal, I soon found it to be the same that had given me so much uneasiness.

“ He made no difficulty to suffer me to charge myself with the delivery of the billet to the charming owner, after which he conducted me, according to his Majesty’s order, to Lord Murray’s apartment, where he then was.

“ That Lord, in the most obliging terms, thanked me for the service I had rendered him, and seemed full of regret for the indifferent recompense I had received for it.

“ I begg’d his Lordship would not think of the rough treatment I had experienced, nor over-rate the services I had rendered him, that I only stood forward in the cause of humanity, in defending his Lordship, in an unequal contest, and that I was happy my exertions had been crowned with success, but that I deserved no thanks ; since had his Lordship been the meanest subject in his Majesty’s dominions, I should have given him my assistance with the same alacrity, that I had done on the present occasion.

“ His Lordship grasped my hand in silence, while the big tear stood in his eye. I begged that he would not exert himself to talk much, as that would greatly retard his cure.

“ Indeed the nobleness and generosity of Lord Murray’s character had won me to his interest ; and I could only lament that I was his rival.

“ His Majesty was most graciously pleased to express his concern for the injustice which had been done me, and to bestow far greater praise on my action than it deserved.

“ I withdrew fully satisfied with the acknowledgements of Lord Murray. Every one was almost convinced that my being present at this dreadful scene

was accidental. They thought it very probable, that walking near the spot I was merely attracted thither by hearing the clashing of swords.

“ It was, however, whispered about to the disadvantage of Caroline ; and in order to put a stop to those rumours her father determined to unite her in the indissoluble bonds of wedlock to Lord Murray, as soon as he should have recovered his health, which was speedily hoped for, loss of blood being the greatest obstacle to his Lordship’s recovery.

“ The effect this melancholy news had upon me, can more easily be felt than described, for a time neither reason nor religion could silence my grief ; but as I had expected it, and had fore-

seen it as an unavoidable stroke, I summoned all my constancy : I feigned an indisposition for several days, that I might prepare and fortify my reason against such an inevitable misfortune. And though my happiness and peace of mind was lost for ever, I could not help admiring the many good qualities of my successful rival ; I therefore strove to hide an aching heart under the plea of indisposition ; but alas ! how fruitless were my precautions.

“ It availed me little to represent to my imagination, that my extreme sorrow was neither just nor reasonable ; it was wholly out of my power to overcome it ; and the idea of Caroline’s infidelity, which I incessantly opposed to the violence of my passion, was too weak to triumph over it.

“In this state I continued for some time, striving to hide my real situation from those friends who were solicitous for my welfare ; and I at length determined (as Caroline was lost to me for ever) to master that violent grief, which now preyed upon my mind, and struck at the very root of my existence.

CHAP. V.

“BEING unwilling to manifest to the court any signs of my real situation, I resolved to quit England, and to end my days in some part of the world, far, far from my native country ; for since I had lost her on whom my hopes of happiness hung. I was indifferent as to my future fate, for every joy seemed banish’d for ever with the loss of Caroline.

“ Having formed this resolution, I began to prepare to put it into execution. I privately got my affairs in order, and furnished myself with money for a long journey.

“ When the morning of the day which preceded that of my departure, came, I thought it requisite, the better to conceal my design, to make my appearance at the palace as usual : but that was no other than a vain pretence wherewith I endeavoured to satisfy my reason ; for in reality, I was dragged thither by the secret pleasure of once more beholding my still dear, though ungrateful Caroline.

“ Accordingly I went to court, and then, from every one, I met the confirmation of that fatal union, which was

to prove my ruin. After some stay, I was about to return, without even the poor consolation of having a sight of Caroline ; when passing by her apartment, I saw her coming out. She was alone ; and the despair which was visible in my eyes, arresting those of the lovely tyrant, she stopped me.

“ ‘ Reuben,’ said she, in a low voice, ‘ you fly from me : a false appearance deceives you, while I am the most wretched female upon earth !’

“ ‘ Ungrateful Caroline,’ replied I, fixing my eyes on hers, ‘ I am but too wretched : indeed I have great cause ; I have been an eye-witness of your unhappiness ; but I shall soon deliver you for ever from an object whose presence would incessantly reproach your perfidy.’

“ It was with the utmost difficulty I uttered these words, as my violent emotion almost deprived me of the power of speech, and with some satisfaction I beheld Caroline redden in a violent degree, and appeared greatly agitated. I was astonished, and for a moment thought I had upbraided her unjustly, but then the proofs of her guilt returned to my mind with such force, that I was convinced, that though my language to her was harsh and perhaps insulting, still her conduct sufficiently justified me in the expressions I had made use of.

“ As she appeared too much confused to address me, a pause of some length ensued, during which I took a retrospect of my conduct towards her, and of the speech I had just made, but

could discover nothing but what my reason and my conscience approved of.

“ I waited impatiently for her reply, which at length she couched in the following terms.

“ ‘ My conduct must certainly have appeared mysterious to you, but whatever degree of mystery may be attached to me, suffice it to say that I have not deserved those cruel expressions, you have jnst used.’

“ She paused for a moment to recover herself, she appeared greatly agitated ; and at length proceeded.

“ ‘ Ap Thomas,’ said she in tears, ‘ had taken a resolution to avoid any private conversation with you, as one of the

greatest dangers that could attend me; but it is my wish to correct a mistake which appears to give you great uneasiness.

“I can easily convince you of my innocence : would to heaven I could as easily conceal from you my weakness ! come, therefore, this evening to my apartment ; I will take care that we shall not be interrupted : but remember that it will be the last meeting that my duty can ever permit me to grant to you !”

“ At these words she left me ; and I beheld in her eyes so much tenderness and sincerity, that my fears were all dissipated instantly. I felt rekindling in my breast some sparks of those pleasures which had been so long banished.

from thence : and I returned to my father's house so different from what I had been when I last left it, that I scarce knew myself.

“ It is needless for me to tell your majesty with what impatience I waited for the hour in which I was to go to the appointed place : those who have ever felt the anxieties of love, are too well acquainted with the different effects that irresistible passions produce.

“ Never day appeared to me so tedious : but at last the wished for night arrived, and I flew to the place of my assignation. Caroline, who, to disengage herself from a crowd of importunate visitors, had feigned a sudden indisposition, and retired to her own apartment. And the better to avoid

suspicion, had lain down upon a couch, and it was in that situation she received me.

“ Her head attire was an elegant dishabille : and notwithstanding the rest of her apparel was answerable to that simplicity, she never appeared in my eyes more beautiful than she did at that moment. Several of her female attendants were amusing themselves in her apartment upon a piece of embroidery.

“ I must confess I felt rather confused at appearing before Caroline, because I appeared in the character of an accuser, and had come there to hear her defence. It was evident I thought that she could clearly prove her innocence, or she would never have invited me to a private conference. And when

she had established that, how completely I should be at her mercy, for having once doubted her constant affection.

“She might perhaps thought I be compelled to Lord Murray ; and probably a sacrifice at the shrine of avarice and ambition, in chusing rather to sacrifice her own happiness than her parents welfare.

“These thoughts passed rapidly in my mind as I cast my eyes upon the lovely maid. She perceived my confusion, and relieved me by the following good natured address :

“ ‘ Come hither, ap Thomas ;’ said she, ‘ I want to consult you about something that concerns me.’

“ At these words she commanded me to sit down by her, the distance from her attendants being such as to preclude the possibility of their overhearing us.

“ ‘It is in vain,’ said she, ‘for us to flatter our imaginations, by holding out hopes of happiness which never can be realized. For, added she in a tremulous voice, ‘I can no longer avoid giving my hand to Lord Murray ; and notwithstanding the sentiments I have for you, we must part for ever : my duty compels me to act contrary to my inclinations : but alas ! such is the destiny of persons of rank : their hearts are never consulted ; they are ordained for victims, and as such are compelled to accept whatever yoke is imposed upon them ! My father insists

on my accepting of Lord Murray, and I must, of necessity, bid an eternal adieu both to your love and your company. Prepare yourself therefore to stand the shock with constancy, and think upon what my honour and character exacts from me.'

“ ‘ I am fully conscious of the strength of your passion, but for my sake endeavour to conquer it. I know your suspicions, and it is in order to satisfy both the one and the other, that I have run the hazard of suffering you to come hither, notwithstanding I am betrothed to Lord Murray.

“ ‘ O God !’ I exclaimed, no longer able to contain myself,’ and can you Caroline preach patience and resignation to one who has lost every hope of

happiness in the world? Can you imagine mine a boyish, or a childish passion, that an absence from you would wean your image from my heart? I should indeed be unworthy of you, be unworthy of such a treasure, was my affection fixed upon so slight a foundation! No my Caroline, however presumptuous my love may be, still it is ardent and sincere, and far, far above my endeavours to conquer it.'

"Caroline was softened at the animated manner, with which I expressed myself. Her fine eyes were suffused with tears, and now the pearly drops chased each other down her pale cheek.

"She several times attempted to speak, but the violence of her grief rendered her unequal to the task.

“ She at length assumed a degree of composure, and then proceeded.

“ ‘ You ought to be satisfied with what I have already said, but to clear my own character from any wrong imputation respecting the late accident, I am compelled to inform you the reason of the meeting. On the day of the ball, at which so many extraordinary incidents succeeded each other, Lords Montjoy and Selwyn separately caused me to be demanded in marriage of my father.

“ ‘ Those propositions could do no less than displease him, as well upon account of the ill qualities of those Lords, as the promise he had made to Lord Murray. He complimented them both ; and in order to get rid of their importunities, told them, that it was

not in his power to recall his consent which he had given to Lord Murray, which alliance would shortly be consummated. Thosetwo unworthysuitors grew outrageous at that refusal, which, in all appearance, was the excuse to the base action they had perpetrated.

““My Father, soon after, came into my apartment, where, having given me an account of what had passed between them, he told me, that in order, for the future, to avoid refusals of that nature, it was his pleasure, thatI should prepare myself, in two days to be united to Lord Murray, adding, that he grew impatient at the unnecessary delay.

““ At these words he withdrew, leaving me absorbed in grief. The

time he gave me,' continued Caroline, 'appeared so short, that I was utterly at a loss how to act.

" 'The billet you wrote me pierced me to the soul: I read, in the most lively colours, the torments under which you languished, without having it in my power to afford you the smallest assistance or relief. I determined, therefore, at last, to entreat Lord Murray to defer the celebration of the nuptials for some time.

" 'I doubted not but that he would comply with my entreaty, and in the meanwhile to calm the agitations of your mind, I had the imprudence to take with me an answer to your note, which you expected, and which I had the misfortune to drop at the ball. I

have remained ever since in the utmost anxiety to know into whose hands it had fallen.'

" ' Fear nothing, my dear Caroline,' said I, with precipitation: ' Chance, which gave me so great a share in the incidents of that unfortunate night, to repair the tortures I had endured, caused that precious pledge of your goodness to fall into my possession: Here is,' continued I, ' that fatal billet which has given me as much torture as it now affords me pleasure.

" ' Heaven! could I imagine that I was the object of those tender regards: to see it in the hands of Lord Selwyn, and suppose it intended for ap Thomas!'

" Upon this, I informed her of the conversation I had overheard between

Lords Montjoy and Selwyn, of which she was entirely ignorant.

“ I described to her the brutal manner in which Lord Montjoy advanced towards me, and of my escape amongst the crowd, not through fear of his lordship, but from a wish to avoid an altercation with such blood thirsty miscreants. She seemed touched with my sufferings, and we both reflected, with astonishment, upon the caprice of fortune, which at the very time when she seemed absolutely determined on my ruin, reserved for me the glory of disentangling the intricacy of so many extraordinary adventures.

“ After this elucidation, Caroline resumed the discourse.

“ ‘ Far from reaping any advantage from the assignation which I gave to Lord Murray, the fatal consequences it brought upon him, have made my father more earnest for the conclusion of my marriage, and my father is determined that on his recovery, the marriage shall be solemnized, or I for ever forfeit his esteem and affection.

“ ‘ You will say that my father is precipitate,—True--but his reasons are not to be confuted, nor can I any longer blame his precipitation, since the accident may draw on me an unjust censure, which nothing but my marriage can obliterate.

“ ‘ But what redoubles my despair, is, that Murray, whom love has rendered diffident and clear-sighted, still

continues in an astonishment how chance alone should have directed you so opportunely to his assistance : and I hope, as you value my future happiness, you will assist me to extinguish for ever that spark of jealousy which has taken place in his heart, and that you will avoid every opportunity of appearing in my sight.

“‘Let us part, then, my dear Reuben: you see my inclinations ; you see my duty : farewell ; keep me in your memory ; notwithstanding the cruel law which separates us, I shall never forget you.’

“ A flood of tears arrested her discourse ; and reaching out to me her hand, I fixed my lips thereon with such an inexpressible transport, that I should

have felt happy, most happy, could that have been the last moment of my wretched existence.

“ I recovered myself at length in some degree, and said,

“ O Caroline, cruel, though kind, you wish me to keep you in my memory, and you say that you shall never forget me, though I am about to lose you for ever and this interview will no doubt be our last. Teach me then how I shall acquire that resignation which you recommend—teach me how I can ever enjoy a moment of happiness, when my Caroline is in the arms of another.

“ Alas ! My doom is fixed “ fathers have flinty hearts ;” yet why my Caroline should two persons who are so

sincerely attached be so cruelly separated and for ever. Can your father hope that you will be happy as Lady Murray, when your heart is given to another ?’

“Caroline saw my agitation, she pitied me ; but it was evident by her silence, she saw her father’s conduct in the same avaricious light, that I had just pictured.

“It was in vain that I uttered all that the tenderest passion could dictate ; I at length was obliged to retire, pierced to the soul with insupportable grief. I passed the night in the most exquisite torments of mind which precluded the possibility of rest.

“The next day I commenced my journey from a scene that hitherto had

brought to me nothing but misery : on the third day of my departure, I embarked for France, determining to pass through the Continent.

“ The second day of our leaving England we were overtaken by a storm, which threatened us with shipwreck ; for two days we were driven about at the mercy of the wind and waves which threatened momentary destruction ; the morning of the third day brought us a calm ; and now we had a fresh calamity to endure ; the ignorance of our Captain, who declared he knew not where we were, as no reckoning had been kept during the storm.

“ We continued to sail on at

random, hoping either to fall in with a sail, or reach a port.

“ We continued in this way until dark, when the man from the mast head, bellowed forth ‘ land,’ and in a few hours we entered a French port, much delighted by being thus rid of our apprehensions.

“ We landed immediately, the ship came to anchor, and proceeded in quest of lodging and refreshment after our dangers.”

Henry now requested ap Thomas to retire to rest after the fatigues of his recital, and at a future period he would hear the conclusion.

His Majesty appeared greatly af-

fectured at various parts of the narrative, and was pleased to express his pity at the variety of misfortunes his favorite had endured.

It was evident that his Majesty's doubts were completely banished, and he was almost *convinced* of the innocence of ap Thomas.

Notwithstanding his sincere affection for the Queen had nearly blinded his *reason*; his Majesty still had *justice* enough to confess in his own mind, that the accusation against ap Thomas was malicious and without foundation, and he was much more rejoiced at the prospect of the re-establishment of the innocence of ap Thomas, than he should have been in finding him guilty.

Ap Thomas perceived the King was favourably disposed towards him, and though this gave him pleasure unutterable, still the recital of his past sorrows had made him truly unhappy, and with a heavy heart he departed from the palace.

CHAP. VI.

IN the mean-while Elizabeth had entirely abandoned herself to rage and *jealousy*: that fiend had taken such fast hold of her breast, that nothing but the destruction of ap Thomas, she felt assured, could appease her.

She saw his *coldness*, which she called contempt. She felt convinced that her passion would never be re-

turned, as ap Thomas's duty and affection to the King was too firm, and his sense of honour too great, ever to allow him to be guilty of an action so infamous and base.

She was resolved on his ruin. Her *hatred* now was as violent and implacable, as her *love* for him had been, and the unfortunate ap Thomas had yet to learn that no enemy was so much to be feared as a "woman scorned."

"Have I stooped to love this man!" exclaimed the queen, one day, when his coldness flashed across her mind, "Have I so far forgot that dignity and duty that I ought to have supported; for so poor a thing as

this!" added she with a contemptuous sneer.

"Proud man, thou shalt find that where my love is *scorned*, my hatred may be *feared*! Could'st thou think me so weak, so poor a fool, as to pass in silence, such a contemptuous rejection of my condescension?"

The Queen paused—she paced her apartment in disordered steps. Her thoughts were so confused, that she could think of no certain plan for the ruin of ap. Thomas, further than she had already contrived, but she resolved immediately to see the King, and not to cease her importunities till he had given her revenge on his insolent and contemptuous favorite.

She flattered herself with the thought of having inspired the credulous Henry with the same malignant jealousy as raged within her own breast, and in a short time she expected to see ap Thomas fall under the effects of that jealousy:

But she found herself deceived, when the next opportunity she took to start a discourse to the King upon that subject, he replied as follows:

“ I think your Majesty must have entirely mistaken the character of ap Thomas; indeed I am sure you have. I have questioned him with the greatest scrutiny, in order to discover the state of his affections, and to exact from him a full and clear confession.—

“ I have succeeded—he has opened his heart to me. The result has convinced me that your Majesty was greatly deceived when you supposed ap Thomas entertained any other sentiments for you, than those he ought to feel for the wife of his sovereign.

“ His story was told me in confidence, and I am confident your Majesty will feel satisfied, when I assure you, that his affection for you is of that chaste nature I have just described.

“ He has been very unfortunate; he has acquainted me with the object of his passion; he has *convinced* me that he loves her, and her alone.

“ He has been particularly unhap-

py, and I (as I am sure your Majesty would, were you made acquainted with his sufferings) pity him from the bottom of my heart.

“ I have been thus explicit with you, that you may not harbour any animosity against him, and that you will, I hope, receive him in future as my favorite and friend.

“ Believe me, I rejoice in his justification—a justification that leaves not the smallest doubt upon *my mind* of his innocence; I must beg to add *my* entreaties to those of ap Thomas, that you will re-instate him in your favour and good opinion.”

Those words, instead of calming the agitations of Elizabeth, served

but to increase her deadly ire; she almost sank under these contending emotions: love, jealousy, rage, and curiosity, alternately invaded her heart; and in spite of her natural dissimulation, she with difficulty concealed the baneful secret. Having recovered herself, she returned for answer:

“Your communication, my Lord, has served but to heighten my indignation against that man, who, having already a female on whom his heart is previously engaged, has chosen me for the object of his railery.

“But I suspect the tale he has communicated to you, is merely the invention of his fruitful mind.

“ Suffer me, therefore, rather to doubt the truth of this story, which, it appears, has great weight on the mind of your Majesty, and to assist you in fathoming the bottom of this mystery, which I cannot, by any means, comprehend; and which, no doubt, is a base fabrication to impose upon the known generosity of your Majesty’s disposition.”

“ I cannot think it possible,” replied the King, earnestly, “ that ap-
Thomas could be so base as to *invent* so ingenious a defence.

“ No, no, I know him better—and, indeed, I am surprized your Majesty should suffer a doubt to remain on your mind, after what I have said

respecting him, which is *all* I can inform you of, consistent with that honour which I pledged to him."

The Queen saw that his Majesty was convinced of the innocence of ap Thomas—she saw that unless some new charge was brought against him, her accusation would fall to the ground. After a short pause, she said—

"I can assure your Majesty that I do not wish to be made acquainted with any part of ap Thomas's story; more especially as you have given *your honor*, to keep his secret, and that I know is held so sacred with your Majesty, that I congratulate myself on the subject being of so little consequence."

This was spoken in a tone of the keenest irony. The pride of the Queen was evidently hurt.

She had expected a minute account of what had passed between ap Thomas and his Majesty. The result has shown how greatly she was disappointed.

Elizabeth now began to converse on different subjects, taking an opportunity of mentioning, occasionally, all the ladies of the Court, celebrated for their beauty, in order, if possible, to exact from his Majesty the secret.

But he, displeased with an inquisitiveness which he was by no means disposed to satisfy, ended the con-

versation, and retired to his apartment.

The Queen, thus left at liberty, pondered for a few moments on the late scene between his Majesty and herself, and she determined to send for Lady Lichfield, and communicate to her all she had heard.

“ I was before sensible,” said the Queen to her confidante, as she entered the apartment, “ of the just indignation which the slights of an ungrateful favorite inspires in an amorous and generous breast.

“ But, until this moment, I had conceived only faint and imperfect ideas of the racking, and insupportable tortures of real jealousy !

“Ap Thomas is in love! That is a fact beyond a doubt. Perhaps even now, in concert with my unworthy rival, he laughs at my weakness, and derides my impotent resentment.

“With what triumph and satisfaction ought she not to receive the sacrifice of all my tenderness, and my eager forwardness, while, abandoned to the cruellest agitations, I consume myself in fruitless regrets!

“No!” continued she, with still greater rage, “they shall never triumph with impunity over Elizabeth.

“Their insolence, their temerity, and their disdain, shall be punished by their death: their blood only shall satiate my revenge, and while in the

pangs of death, will I mock their sufferings by deriding their hopeless love?

“ You Litchfield” added she, addressing her wily confidant, “ you must before this fatal scene takes place, assist me in finding out my odious rival.

For a time they suspected Lady Murray, but the retired life which she led, banished their suspicion, although her merit and great personal attraction might warrant them ; but there was so little appearance of that lady being the person they sought for, that they could not continue a moment in that opinion.

They named in succession all the ladies with whom ap Thomas had the least intimacy, or even acquaintance ;

but he showed so little appearance of attachment to any one in particular, that they could not possibly fix any certain judgment.

At last it was concluded between them, that Lady Lichfield should take care to have his motions so narrowly watched, that it should be impossible for him to make one step without her knowledge.

The Queen was now no longer influenced by the tender impulses of love, but, on the contrary, was precipitately hurried forward by an impetuous torrent of fury, revenge, and aversion.

Some time elapsed before she made any discovery that appeared to

satisfy her unjust resentment ; but, at length, she imagined she had found the object of her hatred.

CHAP. V.

“ LADY Litchfield one day brought her Majesty a small box with a miniature in it, which she had found in one of the apartments in the palace ; and the beauty of the diamonds with which it was ornamented, was a sufficiently convincing proof of its owner being a person of consideration.

The Queen, who interpreted every thing according to the dictates of her passions, without consulting reason, immediately concluded, that it had been dropped by ap Thomas.

She opened it with the utmost precipitation, and immediately knew the features of Caroline, daughter of the late deceased Lord Montgomery.

That young lady was extremely beautiful, of an illustrious family, and a vast fortune: her father, upon his death bed, recommended her to the care of Lady Loftus, a widow relation, by whom the beautiful Caroline had been brought up from her infancy.

Ap Thomas, who had a great veneration and friendship for that

family, sometimes visited her: there wanted no more to make the highest and most groundless suspicion pass the imagination of the jealous Elizabeth for incontestible truth.

She blindly accused her want of penetration, for having been so long imposed upon by that imaginary correspondence, and resolved to sacrifice to her vengeance, those two innocent victims.

She immediately commanded Lady Lichfield to acquaint her with all she knew concerning Caroline: she was answered as follows:

“Since that young lady’s appearance at court, and your Majesty doubtless remembers her first appearance, several

persons of distinction have made fruitless attempts to gain her affections; and, for three months past Lord Merenton has been her passionate admirer.

“This nobleman was one of the bravest and most gallant men in Britain, but was of so hasty and violent a temper, that, during the first motions of his passion, he was entirely deaf to reason, and, it was thought, that upon this consideration the young lady had refused to declare in his favour.”

“Her love to ap Thomas, shall cost her dear,” cried the enraged Queen, “she shall soon feel the effects of the fury she has kindled in my breast. In sacrificing her lover, I am resolved to expose her to the violence of Merenton.

“Such is my resentment, such are the convulsions with which my tortured heart is torn, that, provided the criminal is drawn down the precipice, I shall not scruple to sacrifice the innocent likewise.

“Here,” said she to her confidant, “artfully convey this miniature into ap Thomas’s pocket, and leave to my address the care of making the advantage, from your so doing, which my vengeance expects.”

Having given Lady Lichfield that order, which, in all probability, was likely to cause all that mischief that revengeful women desired, she passed to the King’s apartments, and there, so well disguising her concern, that none could possibly perceive the agi-

tations of her soul, she proposed the introduction of cards, and named the persons who were to be concerned.

Henry, who lived and breathed only for her, and whose passion increased every hour, readily agreed to it; but far from proving a diversion, it produced very different effects.

It may be imagined that Lord Merenton and ap Thomas were not forgotten.

The parties being assembled, and engaged in play, Lady Lichfield made a sign to the Queen, that she had executed her order, and showed her the ribband attached to the box hanging out of the pocket of ap Thomas.

The Queen made Henry take notice of it, and gave him to understand that she intended to steal it.

He would willingly have prevented her, as being apprehensive that it might be Lady Murray's ; but with what astonishment was he seized when the Queen, having, soon after, with great abruptness, executed her design, exposed to the whole company the likeness of Caroline.

The confusion of ap Thomas was indescribable, at seeing a picture, which, until then, he had never beheld, snatched out of his pocket.

The King was highly incensed for having been, as he thought, so grossly imposed upon by his favourite ; and

Merenton was so much irritated, that it was with the utmost difficulty he was able to contain his rage within the bounds of moderation.

Elizabeth, on the contrary, with a well feigned gaiety, rallied ap Thomas to such a degree, that, in spite of his natural vivacity and presence of mind, he remained so confounded and embarrassed as to what answers he should return, that he confirmed the three persons concerned, in their first suspicions.

Lord Merenton, on his part, unable longer to overcome his passion, left the apartment, the Queen having already broke off play, out of her impatience to take advantage of the discord she had so inhumanly stirred up.

The King, who knew nothing of the interest Merenton had in Caroline, suffered ap Thomas to depart, who had no sooner got without the verge of the court, but he was attacked by that jealous lover, who sword in hand, fell upon him with such fury, that considering the bravery of the parties, their rencounter might have proved fatal to both, had not several of their friends, witnesses of the attack, parted them in time to prevent the dangerous consequences of their quarrel.

They were both conducted to their respective lodgings, where ap Thomas, as soon as he had disengaged himself from the crowd which had followed him home, began seriously to reflect upon the source of that unaccountable adventure.

He doubted not but that it was some new project of the Queen's. It gave him no extraordinary concern, he being accustomed to the persecutions of that unjust female.

But he was apprehensive it might reach the ear of Lady Murray to his disadvantage.

The greatness of his prudence and discretion had all along prevented him from discovering to that lady the sentiments the Queen had for him, and, consequently, he had been obliged to conceal from her the confession which he had been obliged to make to the King.

But as in what had happened, that director of his destiny was im-

mediately concerned, he resolved, that same evening, to acquaint her with the particulars, and to cast the incidents of that unfortunate adventure upon some unknown enemy.

He was still occupied with these reflections, when his brother Charles entered his chamber.

He looked on ap Thomas with a severity to which the latter was unused to receive from him. Ap Thomas saw that his brother was greatly agitated, and he had no doubt but that the late transaction had reached his ears, and no doubt the account had been greatly exaggerated.

But conscious of his own innocence, he waited patiently for his

brother to open the purport of his visit.

“ Brother,” at length said he, “ what is this I have heard? You have engaged yourself in another quarrel, though the effects of a recent one, can scarcely be forgotten—I am sorry, and indeed ashamed to say, that your conduct has displeased me much.”

“ Know you not,” replied ap Thomas, somewhat impatiently, “ that I was attacked so fiercely, that had I not immediately acted upon the defensive, my life must have fallen a victim to the rage and mistaken jealousy of that Lord?”

“ Unworthy indeed is he to be a

Peer of England. He has disgraced the name. And even his Lordship's friends will admit that he attacked me like an assassin.

“ Why then is that frown upon your brow? Can you possibly blame my conduct? Or would you have me tamely stand and suffer the assassin's steel to be plunged in my heart?

“ I view that Lord's conduct in so infamous a light, that I shall never cease to despise him, for his dastardly and unmanly attack upon my life.

“ Even had I been *guilty*, I should not have deserved assassination. And if you are come here to load me with

reproaches for my late conduct, I would advise you to make yourself acquainted with all the circumstances, before you determine in favor of a man who has acted so like an assassin."

Ap Thomas had never spoken in this strain to his brother before, but his rage, at finding him take part with his enemies, was too much for him to bear; he had expected consolation from him, instead of those severe looks which his brother had given him during his visit.

Charles at length said, "I do not mean to reproach you on that subject, I come to charge you with dissimulation, as the late transaction concerns me more nearly than the

rest of the Court, since, as I have entertained for you the utmost affection, you have, notwithstanding, made love to Caroline, and have concealed it from me."

"For heaven's sake, brother," interrupted ap Thomas, impatiently, "of what do you accuse me? Pray pardon my violence. I am innocent. Do not, I intreat you, look on me with such contempt.

"This affair must certainly affect you more than you have declared. Be that as it may, I hope you will believe me when I assert that I am guiltless.

"I truly respect that deserving and

amiable young lady, but I assure you, that my heart is incapable of feeling a warmer sentiment for her.

“ Do not, I intreat you, let your anger, be added to those of my enemies, who would persuade you that I love that lady, when I declare to you solemnly, that it is impossible for me ever to feel more than esteem for her.”

“ What !” replied Charles, smiling, “ the picture of a beauty is found upon a man, and he pretends easily to persuade the world, that he has only *respect* and *esteem* for the object who bestows that favour !

“ Ah ! Reuben ! Do not any longer

attempt to conceal from me what you cannot possibly keep from public knowledge."

" I understand you not. Your ironical remarks, Charles, are ill-timed. The public opinion is a secondary consideration compared with your's."

" I thought you had always been in the habit of taking my word, and never, till now, did you question my veracity."

" But I see I have lost your confidence ; you credit the assertions of others in preference to those of your brother."

“ You have certainly a right to think and act for yourself, but I did not know I had given you any reason to suppose that I should depart from my tried veracity.

“ Charles, your anger is more deadly than the sword of the assassin. Do not continue to suppose me capable of telling you a falshood.

“ The world always judge by appearances, but I must confess that I expected a different conduct from my brother.

“ Believe me Charles, that however appearances may be against me, I can, nevertheless, safely avow, that though it is undeniably certain, that

the miniature you mention was found upon me, yet, upon my honor, it was not placed there by me, nor do I know by what means it could possibly have come there."

"Of that I am equally ignorant," interrupted Charles, assuming a serious air; but I will no longer keep you in suspense concerning the person to whom it belongs.

"I lost it in the palace, and it was upon me, that the amiable Caroline conferred that favour, a favour, of which I have proved my unworthiness, by taking so little care of it.

"I have to reproach myself for having concealed my passion from

you; but you ought to pardon my keeping a secret, since that is the only pleasure of love.

“ I will now make amends for my fault, by an ingenuous recital of the origin of the love I have for that lady.”

CHAP. VIII.

CHARLES AP THOMAS commenced his narrative, as follows:

“ I have already confessed to you, my dear Reuben, that I ought not to have upbraided you for a want of confidence on your part, since you will have an equal right to accuse *me* of the same fault.

“ And I must confess that had not the incident of the] miniature taken place, most likely you would have remained in ignorance of what I am now about to inform you of; for I should have hesitated on this subject, to make a confidant even of a brother.

“ But I am sure you will pardon this omission of my affection for you; and believe me, should I ever lose your friendship and affection, it would make me truly miserable, for I covet no man’s good opinion with so much ardour as my dear brother Reuben’s.

“ But to my story—

“ It is now three years since

I conceived favorable sentiments for the lovely and accomplished Caroline, and such is the good nature, and winning softness of that sweet girl, that "what at first was friendship soon ripened into love."

"And I may venture to say, that it is likewise three years since I have been blessed with a return of my affection; for, by a happy sympathy, our hearts, at one and the same time, felt the tenderest effects of that soothing passion.

"You, doubtless, remember, my dear brother, that I ran through all my studies and exercises with the young Renoard, and that, from our very infancy, the strictest friendship

and inclination for each other commenced between us.

“About the time I mentioned, he took a journey into the country to visit his mother; and to whose virtue and great merit you are no stranger.

“After he had made some stay there, he began to be uneasy and melancholy at our separation, and wrote me such pressing letters to come to their seat, that, at length, I determined to gratify his request, and prevailed upon three young gentlemen of the names of Beresford, Cleremont, and Russell, to accompany me, to our friend in his solitude.

“ Another letter from Renoard, hastened our journey sooner than we had intended.

“ He wrote to me, ‘ That, in order to render the country more agreeable to us, at our arrival, we should chuse a certain day, when all the ladies of that part would attend as shepherdesses at a rural ball he intended to give, to welcome us.

“ That, if we did not find it answer the idea he gave us of it, we should, however, be sure of seeing some very beautiful young creatures.

“ In order to avoid any inconvenience resulting from our appear-

ance we should come habited a shepherds.

“ That, under favour of that disguise, we might perhaps, inspire with love some hearts that had never yet sighed.

“ That, for his own part, he would not fail of being present at a diversion which so agreeably flattered his inclinations, and to that purpose he had, already, prepared his disguise.

“ This letter I communicated to our above-mentioned friends, and we all agreed to follow his instructions; and at the appointed time we commenced our journey towards Glou-

cestershire, the seat of festivity, very well disposed to participate of the promised satisfaction.

“ We procured our shepherd's habits at a village some distance from the place assigned for the assembly.

“ We took some care that they should be neat and gallant, but not rich, and we doubted not but that they were still too magnificent for the simplicity of the characters we were to meet.

“ The mansion to which we were going was situated in a plain, surrounded by lovely meadows, enamelled with flowers of every kind, through which ran a brook the clearness of whose

waters might have vied in clearness with the finest chrystal.

“ The house appeared plain, but commodious. Before we could arrive at it, we were obliged to pass through a small coppice, with which it was encompassed.

“ We found it full of young shepherdesses, who, in little troops, were dancing with their lovers, to the sound of the tabor and pipe, which made the surrounding scene appear agreeably enchanting.

“ The shepherds, with good voices sing certain sonnets, of which copies were given us.

“ All around were placed tables

covered with delicious viands and ornamented with flowers. It was with great difficulty we disengaged ourselves from those lovely bands; and advanced towards the house.

“The court yard had no other enclosure than a thin hedge of jessamine and honey suckles, which permitted the eye to enjoy a most agreeable prospect.

“Having traversed the court, we came into the hall, in the midst of which was erected a little throne of roses, which supported a fine large piece of painting, whereon were curiously represented the emblems of love and reason.

“This contract between love and

reason somewhat surprised my companions and myself; but, upon further examination, we were more so, to find our likenesses, in pastoral habits, drawn on the same piece, and so artfully and naturally executed, that we had no manner of difficulty to know for whom they were intended.

“ Reason on one side, under the form of a woman with a severe aspect seemed to forbid us entrance into a delicious garden.

“ Opposite to her stood love, who, with a flattering countenance, seemed to use his utmost efforts to draw us thither :

“ Under the figure which represented

reason, were some neat and appropriate lines ; which pleased my companions and I very much.

“ There were likewise some happy lines under the figure of love which gave us much pleasure, from the neatness and ingenuity of the style.

“ As we were, with pleasure, examining the gallant devices of the figures and conversing upon the beauty of the poetry, Renoard in a very handsome dress, came in laughing.

“ Having mutually embraced, he told us, ‘ that, since we had escaped the snares which had been laid against our liberty in the little wood, he thought it his duty, as a real friend, by

the emblems of that piece, to give us notice of what we had to fear if we passed on any farther.’

“ We in our turn, answered, gaily, that the enchantments which we had hitherto undergone, had not put our hearts to any *very* violent trial; that, his emblems, beautiful and ingenious as they were, had not any dangerous effects; and, that a person of his age and figure was much better to back the dictates of *love*, than the lessons of *reason*, and, to conclude, we intreated him no longer to defer exposing us to the perils with which we were threatened.

“ At these words, he conducted us into several apartments hung round.

with beautiful flowers, whose odours perfumed every part of that delicious place.

“ The many cages which were placed around every window, and full of various kinds of singing birds, afforded our ears inexpressible delight by the sweet warblings of their melodious throats.

“ These objects redoubled our curiosity of knowing in what all these galantries would terminate.”

CHAP. IX.

“ We came at length into the saloon where the ball was to take place ; but whatever ideas we had formed concerning what we should find there, the reality far exceeded the vivacity of our imaginations.

“ Every object in that lovely assembly delighted the eye ; a ravishing symphony charmed the ear ; neatness

and elegance blended every where displayed the very quintessence of a polite taste.

“ But we were about to receive greater pleasure than from the necessities of art, with which we were surrounded.

“ The appearance of about twenty enchanting young beauties, habited in character, appeared alone worthy our whole admiration.

“ Renoard who was delighted with the confusion into which we were thrown, soon made us confess, that the danger he had told us we were likely to be in, was but too real.

“ ‘ You have a taste too, delicate,

and too distinguishing,' said he, 'to mistake yourselves concerning the rank and merit of these shepherdesses who cause that visible confusion.

" 'But, as a token of the honours intended you at this fête, all the shepherds of the assembly leave you at liberty to make your choice.

" 'It is here my dear brother, that I beg you to admire the effects of sympathy; and it is only in order to make you sensible of its power, that I am so particular in the detail of this agreeable adventure.

" 'There were certainly in that assembly some persons not inferior in beauty to Caroline; but my heart made not a moment's hesitation, and, without

concerning myself of what became of my friends, I flew, and cast myself at the feet of that amiable virgin.

“ Her person and dress was inconceivably charming ; and though her only ornaments were flowers, (as she represented Flora) she less imitated that goddess in her dress, than in her charms.

“ ‘ Amiable shepherdess,’ said I to her, ‘ it is dangerous for strange shepherds, like us, to tread this ground. We shall soon pay the price of our temerity with the loss of our hearts, and the only thing we shall carry off, will be our confusion for our defeat.

“ ‘ This is indisputably a net which

the mischievous Cupid has spread to entrap our liberty.

“ ‘ For my own part, I submit without offering resistance, and willingly surrender my heart as a victim to your lovely eyes, which are, doubtless, the snares which that tyrannic deity makes use, in order to triumph over it.’ ”

“ ‘ Fear nothing gallant shepherd,’ interrupted Caroline, with a voice that pierced my very soul, ‘ the god of love has not intrusted us with the management of his conquests ; we should but very indifferently acquit ourselves of so important a commission.

“ ‘ Nevertheless, if he had condescended to trust me with such a glorious charge, both *he* and *I* should have

had cause to be extremely proud for having subjected to his sway a shepherd like yourself.

“ I was perfectly charmed with that obliging reply, and the conversation was continued with infinite brilliancy of wit on her side, and abundance of love on mine; for in reality, my heart was touched, notwithstanding I still was ignorant of the name of the beauty who had obtained such an ascendancy over my faculties.

“ We danced together several times, and I was very much surprized at the graceful and agreeable manner of her performance.

“ After the dance we were ushered into an adjoining room to partake of an elegant collation.

“ After having past the greater part of the night in that little enchanted palace we broke up, and going out, we found several chariots, beautifully adorned with gilding and painting, which, by the light of a great number of torches, conducted us to the mansion of Renoard.

“ I forgot to mention, that the saloon, in which we danced, was detached from the house.

“ During the short interval of this little journey, from that obliging friend, I obtained intelligence of the name and condition of the amiable person who had made such an impression upon my heart.

“ He told me, that she was called

Caroline, the daughter of the late Lord Montgomery : that she was left to the care of his aunt, who had brought her up from her infancy.

“ That being of an ancient family, and great fortune, Lady Loftus, the aunt, was very desirous, that he should pay his addresses to that deserving young lady ; but, that his inclination being so opposite to engagements of that nature, he had entreated Lady Loftus, not to force his inclinations, notwithstanding he was sensible that Caroline had no less a share of sweetness in her temper, than she had of charms in her wit and person.”

“ He likewise gave my companions, who were present at the fête, an account of the remainder of the company ; the men were all persons of

considerable distinction in that part of the country ; but few of the ladies were of considerable birth.

“ Our arrival at the mansion interrupted our conversation ; and, as it was very late, every one retired to the apartment appointed for him.

“ The next morning Renôard presented us to his mother, and aunt, who was on a visit there ; the former rallied us on our last night’s adventure, and told us, that her son, who for some time had intended that small entertainment, had sufficient leisure to prepare that piece which had so agreeably surprised us.

“ I again saw Caroline, and found her so deserving, that I no longer strove to combat with my passion.

“I took an opportunity, in a serious manner to declare myself, and after some hesitation, she confessed, “That the same sympathy which had made me her votary, had forcibly determined her to declare in my favour, but that we should conceal our sentiments till she should be at liberty to dispose of herself.

“Eversince, Lady Loftus, who approved of my passion, permits me to pay my addresses; and nothing could have disturbed my happy state, had not the late fatal accident poisoned the sweetness of it. We will wait until it shall please our sovereign, of his bounty, to advance me to some post worthy her fortune and merit. But the addresses paid her by Lord Merenton, gave me great uneasiness. I expressed my apprehensions to Caroline, who endeavoured to persuade me, that my sus-

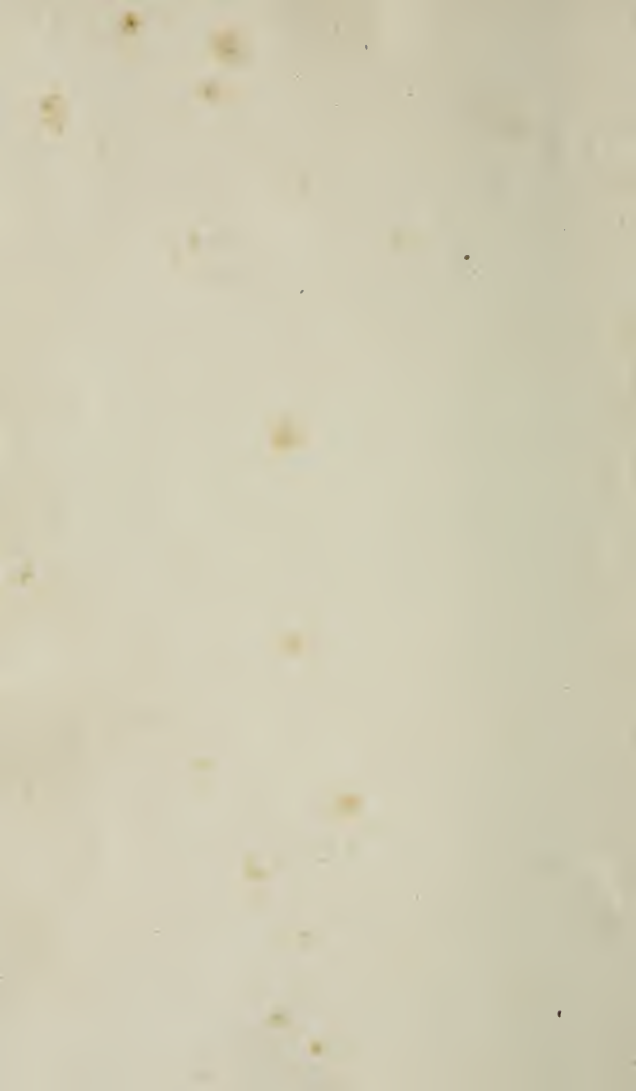
pitions were groundless, but failing in this, she presented me with her picture as a solemn pledge of her affection, which I had the misfortune to lose in the palace."

Charles had just finished his recital, when a messenger entered from his Majesty, saying that he wished to see Ap Thomas. He immediately rose to obey the summons, but his brother would by no means leave him; they therefore agreed to bear each other company.

Ap Thomas was happy to find him of this opinion, and they followed the page to the apartment of his Majesty.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



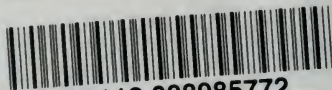




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